JOE BENITEZ'S

THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL No. 1

Lady Mechanika™

DEC 2021

BENITEZ
SOTELO
HEISLER

image®

Joe Benitez's

Lady Mechanika

in

The Monster of the Ministry of Hell

Part 1 of 4

Story & Art
by JOE BENITEZ

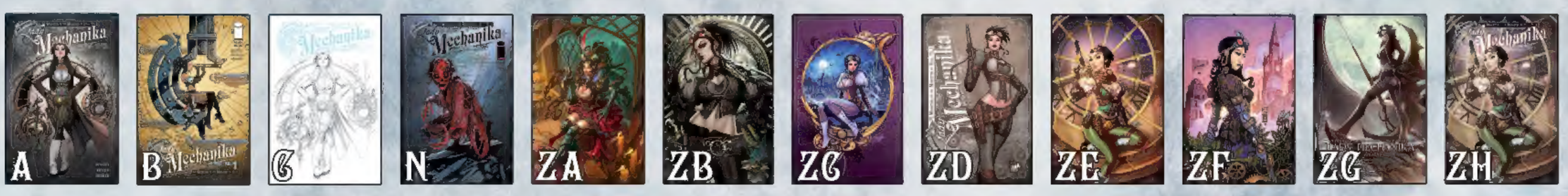
Writing Assists
by M. M. I. I. CHEN

Art Assists
by MARTIN MONTIEL

Colors
by BETH SOTELO

Letters
by MICHAEL HEISLER

Lady Mechanika Created by Joe Benitez



Cover A (Direct Market Edition): Joe Benitez & Beth Sotelo
Cover B (Direct Market Variant): Olivier Vatine • Cover C (Retailer Incentive Edition): Joe Benitez
Cover N (Emerald City Comic Con Exclusive): Joe Benitez & Beth Sotelo

Retailer Exclusives • Cover ZA (Linebreakers): Ekaterina Chesalova • Cover ZB (Pastime Comics): Ariel Diaz • Cover ZC (Tesseract Comics): Siya Oum • Cover ZD (Comic Grail Vault): David Nakayama • Cover ZE (Modern Era Comics Virgin Variant): Chris Ehnot • Cover ZF (Collectors Choice Comics): Victor Irizarry • Cover ZG (Nocturnal Rabbit Comics / Big Time Collectibles): Ivan Tao • Cover ZH (Modern Era Comics): Chris Ehnot

Lady Mechanika Logo by: Peter Steigerwald

LADY MECHANIKA: THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL #1 (OF 4). December 2021. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293. Copyright © 2021 Joe Benitez. All rights reserved. "Lady Mechanika," its logos, and the likenesses of all characters herein are trademarks of Joe Benitez. "Image" and the Image Comics logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for journalistic or review purposes), without the express written permission of Joe Benitez or Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events, and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, or places, without satirical intent, is coincidental. Digital edition.

Visit us on the web at
www.BenitezProductions.com

Find us on Facebook at
Facebook.com/LadyMechanika

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MONSTERS.

Welcome To Mechanika The CITY of TOMORROW

SO THEY SAY TO LITTLE GIRLS AND LITTLE BOYS, SCARED OF THE UNSEEN HORRORS THAT HIDE IN THE DARK.

I THINK IT'S AWAKE.

NOT BLOODY LIKELY.

THUMP THUMP THUMP

I SHOT THAT THING WITH ENOUGH OPIATES FOR A CREATURE TWICE ITS SIZE!

OH BUGGER ME! IT *IS* AWAKE!

GRRRR...

WHAT THE 'ELL KIND OF BEAST 'AVE WE GOT IN THERE?

HOLD UP, MATE! WE'RE ALMOST AT THE MINISTRY...

THUMP THUMP THUMP

THERE ARE NO GHOSTS HIDING IN THE ATTIC.

OR BOOGEYMEN UNDER THE BED.

NO *DEMONS* WHISPERING IN YOUR EAR.

THUMP THUMP

AY! WE GOT A LIVE ONE 'ERE FOR YOU, DIRECTOR!

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

YES, YES. THEY SEND ALL THEIR TROUBLES HERE AND EXPECT ME TO TAKE CARE OF THEM.

THUMP THUMP

THUMP THUMP THUMP

WHAT HAVE WE GOT THIS TIME?

THEY FOUND IT IN THE OLD CITY PARTS. LOCKED IN SOME *DERANGED MURDERER'S* BASEMENT!

HOW GHASTLY! WELL, GO ON THEN. LET'S HAVE A LOOK.

READY, MATES?

SO THEY SAY TO THE CHILDREN, AND TRY TO ASSUAGE THEIR OWN FEARS.

GRRRRR

DEAR LORD!

BUT DEEP IN THEIR HEARTS THEY KNOW...

NOT A WORD OF IT IS TRUE.

IT'S LOOSE!

BOOM

EASY THERE...

BZT BZT

KKKK

IT'S GET'IN' AWAY!

I GOT IT...

BOOM

SO TO ALL THAT SAY, THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS MONSTERS, I SAY...

WHAT THE BLOODY 'ELL IS IT?

NO, MY GOOD GENTLEMEN. FAR FROM IT.

LOCK YOUR DOORS AND SAY YOUR PRAYERS...

AN ABOMINATION IS WHAT THAT IS!

FOR THE MONSTERS ARE REAL...

SHE'S A MIRACLE!

...AND THE MONSTERS ARE...

...HERE...

THANK YOU FOR BRINGING ME TO THE FAIR, LADY MECHANIKA! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO IT FOR SO LONG!

IT'S MY PLEASURE, FRED! I'VE NOT BEEN TO THE FOUNDERS' DAY FAIR IN SOME YEARS.

UNCLE ARCHIE USUALLY BRINGS ME, BUT I GUESS HE WON'T EVER WANT TO ANYMORE...NOW THAT HE HATES ME.

OH, FRED! YOUR UNCLE DOESN'T HATE YOU! I KNOW HE LOVES YOU VERY MUCH. HE JUST NEEDS SOME TIME TO MEND. THEN HE'LL BE BACK TO HIS OLD SELF, YOU'LL SEE.

BESIDES, I'M THE ONE HE'S CROSS WITH.

LOOK, FRED! ALLIE IS HERE!

ALLIE!

FRED!

HAPPY FOUNDERS' DAY!

HAPPY FOUNDERS' DAY, MONTI!

HAPPY FOUNDERS' DAY, ALLIE.

GOOD DAY, MISS ALEXANDRA LITTLETON THE FIRST.

SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK? DOES MY OUTFIT MEET WITH YOUR APPROVAL TODAY? I THOUGHT I SHOULD TRY TO LOOK THE PART IN HONOR OF FOUNDERS' DAY.

HMMM...THE BLOUSE IS A BIT FUSSY, BUT I SUPPOSE IT WILL DO. IT'S MUCH BETTER THAN YOUR USUAL FRUMPERY.

BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW, IT TAKES QUITE A BIT MORE THAN SIMPLY LOOKING THE PART TO PASS YOURSELF OFF AS LADY MECHANIKA.

YOU ALSO NEED TO HAVE A CERTAIN GRACE AND PRESENCE THAT I'M AFRAID YOU SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE.

HEH HEH, I SHALL HAVE TO WORK ON THAT.

PLEASE DO.

COME ON, ALLIE, LET'S GET ON THE RIDES! THERE'S ALREADY A QUEUE FORMING FOR THE HOUSE OF HORRORS!

COULD YOU MIND MY SATCHEL, LADY MECHANIKA?

WOULD YOU ***PLEASE*** STOP CALLING HER THAT! SHE IS ***NOT*** THE REAL LADY MECHANIKA...

LADY MECHANIKA, MY APOLOGIES FOR OUR LATENESS! I WAS BUSY EXAMINING THE TEST RESULTS FROM YOUR BLOOD SAMPLES AND LOST TRACK OF TIME. AND THEN ALLIE COULDN'T FIND HER FAVORITE GOGGLES, WHICH OF COURSE SHE COULDN'T GO WITHOUT, SO WE HAD TO SEARCH THE ENTIRE--

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT, DOCTOR! WE ONLY JUST ARRIVED OURSELVES A FEW MINUTES AGO.

YOU SAID YOU GOT THE TEST RESULTS? WAS THERE ANYTHING OF NOTE?

PARDON? OH RIGHT, THE TEST RESULTS! YES, VERY INTERESTING, ACTUALLY. THE SAMPLE FROM THE...THE ***CREATURE****...WAS HIGHLY UNUSUAL.

HUMAN BLOOD SEPARATES INTO THREE COMPONENTS, YOU SEE, RED CORPUSCLES, WHITE CORPUSCLES, AND SPHERULES. BUT THE CREATURE'S SAMPLE WAS MISSING SPHERULES, AND HAD SOME OTHER UNKNOWN SUBSTANCE INSTEAD. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.

*SEE LADY MECHANIKA: SANGRE.

WHAT ABOUT THE RESULTS FROM MY BLOOD?

YOUR BLOOD CONTAINED THE TYPICAL HUMAN COMPONENTS, IN TYPICAL HUMAN PROPORTIONS.

THAT'S A RELIEF.

THERE WAS, HOWEVER, ONE ODDITY.

ODDITY?

IT ALSO INCLUDED A FOURTH COMPONENT NOT NORMALLY FOUND IN HUMAN BLOOD. I SHALL HAVE TO PERFORM FURTHER TESTS TO BE CERTAIN, BUT IT APPEARS TO BE THE SAME AS THE UNKNOWN COMPONENT IN THE CREATURE'S BLOOD.

I WONDER IF THIS MIGHT BE THE MYSTERY ELEMENT DESCRIBED IN THE JOURNAL YOU APPROPRIATED FROM--

PAPA!

ALLIE?

HELP!
ALLIE!
ALLIE, WHAT'S THE MATTER? ARE YOU OKAY?
MY... MY LEG FROZE AGAIN...I FELL AND NOW I CAN'T FEEL MY FOOT.
WE HAD BEST GET YOU BACK HOME. LADY MECHANIKA, MIGHT I IMPOSE UPON YOU TO HAIL A CAB?
IT'S JUST ANOTHER CRAMP, PAPA. IT'LL BE GONE IN A FEW MINUTES. CAN'T WE STAY, PLEASE?
I'M SORRY, ALLIE, I DON'T THINK--
PLEEEEASE...
WHY DON'T WE FIND SOME PLACE TO SIT AND HAVE SOME REFRESHMENTS WHILE WE WAIT TO SEE IF YOU FEEL BETTER? THEN YOUR FATHER CAN DECIDE WHAT TO DO.
HOME? NO, NO! WE CAN'T LEAVE NOW! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOREVER FOR THE FAIR!
YES! A BRILLIANT IDEA! I AGREE WITH MISS NOT-MECHANIKA! CAN WE STAY, PAPA? PLEASE?
WELL, *UM*... ALL RIGHT. BUT IF IT DOESN'T GET BETTER, WE GO HOME. AGREED?
AGREED! CAN WE GET SOME FAIRY FLOSS?
AND A UNICORN HORN! OH, AND A RAINBOW LOLLIE, AND A...

LADY MECHANIKA, DO YOU BELIEVE GOD WOULD PUNISH AN INNOCENT CHILD FOR THE SINS OF HER FATHER?

WHAT? OF COURSE NOT! WHY EVER WOULD YOU ASK SUCH A THING?

ALLIE...SHE'S... I FEAR SHE'S BEEN AFFLICTED WITH A HORRIBLE DISEASE, THE SAME DISEASE WHICH AILS HER MOTHER.

I REMEMBER YOU MENTIONING YOUR WIFE WAS ILL. WHAT AILMENT DOES SHE HAVE, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME ASKING?

A KIND OF MUSCULAR ATROPHY. NOT MUCH IS KNOWN ABOUT IT, SO I'VE FOCUSED ALL MY RESEARCH ON STUDYING IT, TO NO AVAIL.

IT BEGINS WITH A WEAKNESS IN THE LEGS, CAUSING FREQUENT STUMBLING AND AN AFFECTED GAIT.

MY WIFE CAN NO LONGER WALK AT ALL. AND IT'S SPREADING TO HER UPPER BODY AS WELL. EVEN SPEAKING HAS BECOME DIFFICULT NOW.

I'M SO SORRY, DOCTOR.

BUT MY WIFE'S SYMPTOMS STARTED WHEN SHE WAS MUCH OLDER, AFTER WE WERE MARRIED. ALLIE'S JUST A LITTLE GIRL!

I FEAR MY DAUGHTER IS BEING PUNISHED BECAUSE OF MY MISDEEDS.

NO JUST GOD WOULD CAUSE AN INNOCENT TO SUFFER FOR SOMEONE ELSE'S TRANSGRESSIONS.

IF ALLIE IS IN FACT ILL, IT WOULD JUST BE AN UNFORTUNATE CIRCUMSTANCE, PERHAPS SOMETHING INHERITED FROM HER MOTHER, NOT SOME KIND OF DIVINE RETRIBUTION FOR HER FATHER'S ACTIONS.

BESIDES, WHAT COULD YOU POSSIBLY HAVE DONE TO WARRANT SUCH A HEINOUS PUNISHMENT? YOU'RE A DOCTOR! YOU'VE SAVED COUNTLESS LIVES!

BUT HOW MANY DIED DURING MY TENURE WITH BLACKPOOL? MY HANDS ARE STAINED WITH THE BLOOD OF INNOCENTS!

YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF FOR BLACKPOOL'S MISDEEDS. YOU JUST MADE A MISTAKE, AND PUT YOUR TRUST IN THE WRONG PERSON.

I KNEW HIS REPUTATION. BUT I THOUGHT IT WORTH THE COST, THAT MY RESEARCH WOULD SAVE LIVES! I THOUGHT I WOULD FIND A CURE FOR MY WIFE!

I DIDN'T KNOW THE PRICE WOULD BE PAID BY MY DARLING, BABY GIRL!

SIGH I'VE BEEN THINKING I SHOULD QUIT THIS LINE OF WORK. MOVE TO THE COUNTRY, PERHAPS, AND RAISE SHEEP OR SOMETHING.

JUST ACCEPT GOD'S JUDGMENT AND SPEND WHAT TIME I HAVE WITH MY WIFE AND CHILD.

YOU MUST NOT GIVE UP ON YOUR CALLING, DOCTOR.

THE WORLD WOULD SUFFER TOO GREAT A LOSS IF YOU WERE TO STOP YOUR WORK. THESE HANDS WERE MADE TO HEAL.

IF YOU'VE MADE MISTAKES, SURELY YOU'VE BEEN FORGIVEN. YOUR HEART WAS IN THE RIGHT PLACE.

I KNOW YOU, DOCTOR. YOU'RE A GOOD MAN.

YOUR WORDS ARE A GREAT COMFORT, LADY MECHANIKA. THANK YOU.

IT MEANS MORE TO ME THAN YOU COULD POSSIBLY KNOW THAT YOU, A TRUE HERO OF THE REALM, CAN FORGIVE MY ASSOCIATION WITH BLACKPOOL.

I'M NO HERO, DOCTOR. I'M AS FLAWED AS ANYONE ELSE!

HOW COULD I NOT FORGIVE YOUR FOLLIES WHEN I MYSELF MADE THE SAME MISTAKES? I TOO PUT MY TRUST IN THE WRONG PERSON, AND COUNTLESS PEOPLE SUFFERED BECAUSE OF IT.

ACTUALLY, YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF HER. SHE ALSO WORKED FOR LORD BLACKPOOL.

HER NAME WAS KATHERINE WINTER.

WHA... WINTER? NOT ***COMMANDER WINTER!*** BUT HOW...? WHY...?

IT'S A RATHER LONG STORY...

THE EARLIEST MEMORIES I CAN RECALL ARE OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH, THOSE FIRST DAYS AFTER MY...REBIRTH.

IT WAS NOT A PLEASANT TIME...

FASCINATING... SIMPLY FASCINATING!

MR. JENNINGS, WOULD YOU *PLEASE* REFRAIN FROM TAMPERING WITH THE CREATURE?

JUST KEEP IT CONFINED UNTIL DEACON GRINDLETHORN ARRIVES.

THERE'S NO NEED FOR CONCERN, DIRECTOR. THE DEACON HAS LET ME PERFORM THE PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION BEFORE. HASN'T HE, HARRIS?

THAT HE HAS, MR. JENNINGS. THAT HE HAS.

YES, BUT THIS SUBJECT IS UNLIKE ANY OF THE OTHERS.

THIS...THIS *THING* IS UTTERLY UNNATURAL!

YES! ISN'T IT AMAZING?

LOOK AT THESE MECHANICAL CONSTRUCTS! SO INTRICATELY CRAFTED, MIMICKING ACTUAL MUSCULATURE. IT'S A WORK OF GENIUS!

THE DEVIL'S WORK, MORE LIKE.

DOES THE DEACON NOT TEACH THAT WE SHOULD TURN THE DEVIL'S WORK TO GOD'S PURPOSE?

THIS IS OUR CHANCE! WOULDN'T YOU AGREE, HARRIS?

I WOULD, MR. JENNINGS. I WOULD INDEED.

IT'S ABSOLUTELY INCREDIBLE! THIS FUSION OF METAL WITH ORGANIC TISSUE!

HOW ON EARTH WAS IT--

WHACK
ARGH!
AAAHHHH!
CALM DAAAAAAHHHH!
DEAR LORD!
SLASH
MUH... MUH...
...MY FINGERS!
GOTCHA!
SECURE THAT THING!
HUUUAAAHHH!
SKRITCH
CHOMP
GRRRRRRAA!
AW BLOODY HELL!
UNGH!

Variant Cover Art by Olivier Vatine. Next Page: Main Cover Art by Joe Benitez & Beth Sotelo.

MMXXI

Smiths Inlet
ITZBERGEN
OR
LEN LAN
LAND
Fair Ha
Horn Sound
P. Lookout
The English Winter
in Bell Sound in 1630
Foul Sou
Hope
Cherry I.
Greenland
NO
R
Bl
Admi.
Loom
Willi
I
We
going out
North
North
Wardhu
Gra
Bay
Bell Sound
1615
Jan
Mayen
Iceland

AAAHHH!

HNG!

SLASH

STAND BACK, FELLAS!

OH, CHRIST! THE THING CAN CLIMB!

I'VE GOT IT!

BZZZZ

THUNK

DAMN BLOODY--

ENOUGH!

DEACON GRIN!

WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS GOING ON HERE?

WE JUST 'AD A BIT OF TROUBLE SUBDUIN' THE CREATURE, SIR. BUT WE 'AVE IT ALL UNDER CONTROL NOW!

CREATURE?

AH, THIS WOULD BE THE NEW PATIENT?

MY APOLOGIES, DEACON. THE STANDARD SEDATIVES DO NOT SEEM TO FUNCTION PROPERLY ON THE...ON THE PATIENT.

BLOODY THING NEAR TORE MY FACE OFF, IT DID! AN' LOOK WHAT IT DID TO HARRIS' FINGERS! SLASHED 'EM ALL RIGH' OFF!

DID IT NOW?

MR. JENNINGS, PLEASE TAKE MR. HARRIS --AND HIS FINGERS--TO MY SURGERY. I'LL TEND TO HIM AFTER I TAKE A LOOK AT OUR NEW GUEST.

WELL, HELLO, CHILD...

YOUR EYES!

SURELY THESE ARE A MARK OF THE BEAST!

FEAR NOT, MY LITTLE LAMB. GOD HAS SENT YOU TO ME TO BE SAVED.

I AM DEACON GRINDLETHORN, BUT YOU MAY CALL ME... DEACON GRIN.

I SERVE AS THE LORD'S HANDS, AND BY HIS GRACE, I SHALL DELIVER YOU FROM THIS EVIL.

PREPARE HER FOR CLEANSING...

EVERY WAKING MOMENT WAS SPENT IN ABJECT TERROR, NOT KNOWING WHERE I WAS, OR EVEN ***WHO*** OR ***WHAT*** I WAS.

JUST AN ENDLESS BARRAGE OF TESTS AND PROCEDURES...

BEATINGS FROM THE GUARDS AND ORDERLIES...

AND WORST OF ALL, THE UNGENTLE MINISTRATIONS OF THE BUTCHER IN THE MASK, THIS DEACON WITH HIS NEEDLES AND PROBES AND...

...AND KNIVES...

INTERESTING. THE INCISIONS FROM YESTERDAY'S PROCEDURE HAVE ALREADY ALMOST COMPLETELY HEALED.

=GASP!=

INTERNAL ORGANS SEEM TO BE UNAFFECTED BY THE--

DEACON! SHE'S WAKING!

MR. JENNINGS, DID YOU ADMINISTER THE PROPER AMOUNT OF ANESTHETIC AS WE DISCUSSED, GIVEN HER PHYSIOLOGY?

UNGH... UNGH...

HARRIS ADMINISTERED THE ETHER TODAY, DEACON.

MR. HARRIS?

THUMP THUMP THUMP

AAAAAAHHHHH!

MY APOLOGIES, MR. DEACON, SIR. I MUST'VE GOTTEN THE DOSAGE WRONG.

PLEASE ADMINISTER ANOTHER DOSE IMMEDIATELY.

YES, SIR. RIGHT AWAY, SIR.

UNGH... UNGH!

HEH HEH...

UNGH...

AT THE TIME, I BELIEVED THAT MY TORMENTORS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR MY CONDITION.

UNGH...

AAAAHH...

I WAS LIKE A NEWBORN KITTEN, OR RATHER, A CAGED TIGER, WITH AN UNFAMILIAR AND UNCONTROLLABLE STRENGTH...

AAAAUGHHH!

THAT THEY WERE THE ONES WHO HAD REPLACED MY ARMS AND LEGS WITH THESE MECHANICAL MONSTROSITIES.

FOR THOUGH I REMEMBERED NOTHING OF MY LIFE BEYOND THESE DARK HALLS, I SOMEHOW KNEW THAT THESE LIMBS OF MINE WERE...*WRONG.*

AND, A DESPERATE NEED TO BREAK FREE...

SKREEEEE

THUMP THUMP THUMP

THUMP

UNG... HUAAAH!

AAAHHH!

WAAAAAAHH!

UNGH... UNGH...

AAAAAHHHHHHH!

KEEP IT DOWN!

AAAHHHH!

THUMP THUMP THUMP

XV

BLIMEY, MATE.

SOUNDS LIKE BLOODY MURDER!

AY, SHUT YOUR 'OLE OR I'LL GO IN THERE AND--

THUMP THUMP

HUNGHH!

THUMP

AW BUGGER! IT'S ESCAPIN'!

STOP IT!

IT'S TOO FAST!

BA-THUMP

ESCAPE!

BA-THUMP

:GASP!:

IT WASN'T UNTIL THE DAY I MANAGED TO BREAK FREE OF MY CELL THAT THINGS BEGAN TO GROW CLEARER.

FOR THAT WAS THE DAY WHEN I FIRST ENCOUNTERED...

...THE OTHERS...

AAAAHH!

EEEEE!

AAAHHHH!

WOW...

hee hee hee

AS I STARED INTO THEIR GROTESQUE VISAGES AND SAW MY OWN REFLECTED FROM THEIR EYES, I FINALLY BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND.

THIS WAS THE PLACE WHERE THEY LOCKED UP PEOPLE LIKE ME.

THIS WAS THE PLACE WHERE THEY LOCKED AWAY...

AAHHHHHHHHH

...MONSTERS...

TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE:

Amongst a frightening menagerie of monstrous-looking creatures, a young Lady Mechanika meets a seemingly bright light in the dark halls of the Ministry of Health...Miss Katherine Winter. Main cover by Joe Benitez & Beth Sotelo, and variant cover by Matteo Scalera & Moreno Dinisio.

AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL COMIC SHOP IN JANUARY!

TONY FLEECS TRISH FORSTNER

STRAY™ DOGS

DOG DAYS

QUESTIONS WILL BE ANSWERED, MYSTERIES WILL BE SOLVED, AND OLD WOUNDS WILL BE TORN OPEN

DECEMBER 2021

IMAGECOMICS.COM
FOLLOW #IMAGECOMICS

STRAY DOGS is ™ & © 2021 Tony Fleecs & Trish Forstner. Image Comics ® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

image®

MACKENZIE WALKER GREENWOOD MIWA BOWLAND

COMPASS™

VOLUME 1: THE CAULDRON OF ETERNAL LIFE

"...PROVIDES READERS WITH AN IMMERSIVE SETTING AND PROPULSIVE START TO A STORY UNLIKE ANYTHING IN COMICS TODAY."
—COMICBOOK.COM

"...FAST PACED AND A LOT OF FUN."
—MAJOR SPOILERS

"ROBERT MACKENZIE AND DAVE WALKER HAVE COME UP WITH A BRILLIANT STORY HERE FOR COMPASS!"
—SCIFI PULSE

image

JANUARY 2022

#IMAGECOMICS • IMAGECOMICS.COM

COMPASS™ & © 2022 Justin Greenwood, Robert Mackenzie & Dave Walker. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

JUNI BA'S

MONKEY MEAT™

JANUARY 2022

"A showcase of pure imagination and storytelling prowess. **MONKEY MEAT** is a dream of what comics should be, but it's here in your hand right now."
—Hassan Otsmane-Elhaou
Editor in Chief of *Panel X Panel* Magazine

MONKEY MEAT MULTINATIONAL

image®

#IMAGECOMICS
IMAGECOMICS.COM

MONKEY MEAT IS ™ & © 2022 Juni Ba. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

Lady Mechanika Titles:

LADY MECHANIKA
(The Mystery of the Mechanical Corpse)

THE TABLET OF DESTINIES

THE LOST BOYS OF WEST ABBEY

LA DAMA DE LA MUERTE

THE CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

SANGRE

THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL
(coming soon)

LADY MECHANIKA:
STEAMPUNK COLORING BOOK I

LADY MECHANIKA:
STEAMPUNK COLORING BOOK II

For more Lady Mechanika, visit:
***BENITEZPRODUCTIONS.COM** and*
FACEBOOK.COM / LADYMECHANIKA

BENITEZ PRODUCTIONS, INC. • **Joe Benitez**: Creative Director / Chief Executive Officer • **Marcia Chen**: Editor-in-Chief / Chief Financial Officer • **Michael Heisler**: Production Director • **Tabitha Martin**: Convention Director • **Andria Richard**: Production Assistant • **BENITEZPRODUCTIONS.COM**

IMAGE COMICS, INC. • **Todd McFarlane**: President • **Jim Valentino**: Vice President • **Marc Silvestri**: Chief Executive Officer • **Erik Larsen**: Chief Financial Officer • **Robert Kirkman**: Chief Operating Officer • **Eric Stephenson**: Publisher / Chief Creative Officer • **Nicole Lapalme**: Controller • **Leanna Caunter**: Accounting Analyst • **Sue Korpela**: Accounting & HR Manager • **Marla Eizik**: Talent Liaison • **Jeff Boison**: Director of Sales & Publishing Planning • **Dirk Wood**: Director of International Sales & Licensing • **Alex Cox**: Director of Direct Market Sales • **Chloe Ramos**: Book Market & Library Sales Manager • **Emilio Bautista**: Digital Sales Coordinator • **Jon Schlaffman**: Specialty Sales Coordinator • **Kat Salazar**: Director of PR & Marketing • **Drew Fitzgerald**: Marketing Content Associate • **Heather Doornink**: Production Director • **Drew Gill**: Art Director • **Hilary DiLoreto**: Print Manager • **Tricia Ramos**: Traffic Manager • **Melissa Gifford**: Content Manager • **Erika Schnatz**: Senior Production Artist • **Ryan Brewer**: Production Artist • **Deanna Phelps**: Production Artist • **IMAGECOMICS.COM**

Joe Benitez's

Lady Mechanika

The tabloids dubbed her "Lady Mechanika," the sole survivor of a mad scientist's horrific experiments which left her with mechanical limbs.

Having no memory of her captivity or her former life, Mechanika eventually built a new life for herself as a private investigator, using her unique abilities to solve cases the proper authorities couldn't – or wouldn't – handle. But she never stopped searching for the answers to her own past.

Set during a fictionalized steampunk Victorian Era, a time when magic and superstition clashed with new scientific discoveries and inventions, *Lady Mechanika* chronicles a young woman's obsessive search for her identity while she solves other mysteries involving science and the supernatural.

BENITEZ PRODUCTIONS

www.BenitezProductions.com

Lady Mechanika: The Monster of the Ministry of Hell #1 of 4
Direct Market Edition – Cover A

Rated T / Teen

image®

ImageComics.com

JOE BENITEZ'S

THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL No. 2

Lady Mechanika

BENITEZ
SOTELO
HEISLER

image®

JOE BENITEZ'S

Lady Mechanika

in

The Monster of the Ministry of Hell

Part 2 of 4

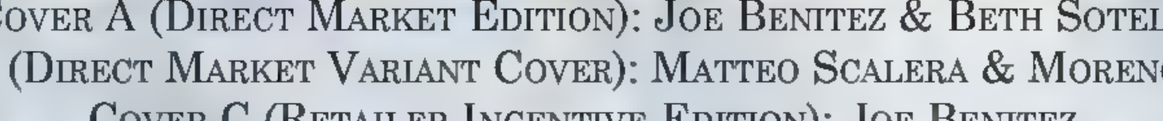
Story & Art
by JOE BENITEZ

Writing Assists
by M M I I. I I. CHEN

Colors
by BETH SOTELO
and SABINE RICH *(Pages 9–11)*

Letters
by MICHAEL HEISLER

Lady Mechanika Created by Joe Benitez



Cover A (Direct Market Edition): Joe Benitez & Beth Sotelo
Cover B (Direct Market Variant Cover): Matteo Scalera & Moreno Dinisio
Cover C (Retailer Incentive Edition): Joe Benitez
Cover ZA (BenitezProductions.com Exclusive): Joe Benitez & Peter Steigerwald
Lady Mechanika Logo by: Peter Steigerwald

LADY MECHANIKA: THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL #2 (OF 4). January 2022. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293. Copyright © 2022 Joe Benitez. All rights reserved. "Lady Mechanika," its logos, and the likenesses of all characters herein are trademarks of Joe Benitez. "Image" and the Image Comics logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for journalistic or review purposes), without the express written permission of Joe Benitez or Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events, and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, or places, without satirical intent, is coincidental. Digital edition.

Visit us on the web at
www.BenitezProductions.com

Find us on Facebook at
Facebook.com/LadyMechanika

I DO NOT KNOW HOW LONG I SPENT CAPTIVE IN THOSE HELLISH HALLS, IN THAT SO-CALLED MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

WAS IT WEEKS, OR MONTHS? OR EVEN YEARS? THE DAYS AND NIGHTS BLED INTO ONE NEVER-ENDING NIGHTMARE.

THEY KEPT ME CAGED, CHAINED, SEDATED WHENEVER THEY COULD MANAGE IT.

THEY TREATED ME LIKE AN ANIMAL.

COME ON, NOW! GET OUT O' THERE!

GRRRR AARRGH

IS IT ANY SURPRISE THEN, THAT I REACTED AS I DID?

I ACTED THE ONLY WAY I COULD...

I SAID, COME 'ERE!

AY, I'LL GET IT OUT!

I ACTED AS AN ANIMAL...

THONK

NNGGHH.... NGGHHHH...

ZZT ZZT

NNGGHH...

HEH HEH, DON' LIKE THE SHOCKER NOW, DO YAH? WELL THA'S WHAT YOU GET IF YOU DON'--

HUNGH!

UNGH...

HUNGH... HUNGH...

NOT THIS TIME! HYAH!

UNGH!

DON' JUS' STAND THERE, YA BLEEDIN' RATBAG! GIT IT WIT' THE SHOCKER!

I GO' IT! I GO' IT!

ZZZZT

BUT DON' TOUCH THE CH...CH...CHA... UNGH!

EH! YOU GOOD THERE, MATE?

UNGH...

AH, AWAKE NOW, MY SWEET ANGEL?

HUNGH... AAAGH... AAAGHH...

HUSH, HUSH... YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, MY LITTLE LAMB. THE LORD IS WITH YOU, HE WILL KEEP YOU SAFE.

UUUNGGH...

ARE YOU READY NOW TO TELL US YOUR NAME?

HUNGH!

UNGH!

NOTHING. YOU'VE HAD IT FOR WEEKS NOW AND STILL HAVE NOTHING.

SHE IS IN AN EXTREME CASE OF TRAUMA-INDUCED HYSTERIA. IT IS UNLIKELY SHE CAN EVEN UNDERSTAND SPEECH IN THIS STATE.

IT MAY BE TEMPORARY. PERHAPS WITH TIME AND TREATMENT...

HUNGH!

HOW LONG?

UNKNOWN. IT MIGHT TAKE JUST A FEW MORE DAYS, OR IT MIGHT TAKE YEARS.

UNACCEPTABLE. MAKE IT SPEAK, DEACON.

WE COULD TRY ELECTRO-THERAPY, A NEW TECHNIQUE I'VE BEEN EXPERIMENTING WITH.

BUT IT IS A DANGEROUS PROCEDURE.

DO WHATEVER IS NECESSARY. WE NEED TO KNOW WHERE THESE MECHANICAL APPENDAGES CAME FROM.

AAAHGH!

VERY WELL.

MR. JENNINGS, THE SEDATIVE, IF YOU PLEASE.

UNGH...

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME...

UNGH!

...THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...

AAAAHHHH!

...FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US...

HHHNGH... HNNNGH...

...LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL...

...FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

YOU ARE IN THE LORD'S HANDS NOW, MY CHILD. MAY HE BE MERCIFUL.

MR. JENNINGS, YOU MAY BEGIN.

YES, DEACON.

GZZ GZZ GZZZZZ

GOOD, GOOD. I WAS RIGHT. SHE CAN HANDLE THE HIGHER VOLTAGE.

UUUNGHHHH...

STOP.

THAT WILL BE ENOUGH FOR TODAY, MR. JENNINGS. CALL FOR THE NURSE TO CLEAN UP AFTER HER.

UNGHH...

MY EVERY WAKING MOMENT WAS A TORMENT.

WAAAAHHH... AAAHHH...

WAAAAAHHHH...

I DESPAIRED OF EVER FEELING ANYTHING BUT FEAR AND PAIN AND MISERY.

BUT THEN CAME A SMALL GLIMMER OF LIGHT.

SHFFT

PSST!

A WHISPERED VOICE IN THE DARKNESS.

WHOA! YOU HAVE RED EYES! THAT'S JUST BRILLIANT!

IT'S OKAY, DON'T BE SCARED! I'M A PRISONER HERE TOO, LIKE YOU. MY NAME'S KAT.

ARE YOU HUNGRY?

YOU MUST BE. THE FOOD THEY GIVE YOU IN SOLITARY IS ATROCIOUS. WHEN THEY TROUBLE TO FEED YOU AT ALL, THAT IS.

HERE, TAKE IT.

THE FOOD IS BETTER-- SLIGHTLY--IN THE DORMITORIES.

IF YOU BEHAVE AND STOP RESISTING, THEY'LL LET YOU OUT OF HERE AND PLACE YOU THERE, WITH ME. THEY--

UH-OH, GUARD'S COMING! I'LL COME BACK WHEN I CAN!

REMEMBER, DON'T FIGHT THEM!

SHFFT

THOSE GREEN EYES GAVE ME SOMETHING THAT I DESPERATELY NEEDED...

HOPE.

I FOLLOWED KAT'S ADVICE AND STOPPED FIGHTING THE GUARDS, HER BRIEF AND SPORADIC VISITS GIVING ME THE STRENGTH TO ENDURE EVEN THE DEACON'S TESTS AND PROCEDURES.

COME OUT.

YOU SEE?

HMMM...YOU ARE CERTAIN SHE WILL BEHAVE? I DON'T NEED ANY MORE TROUBLE IN MY HALLS.

YES, YES. IT'S COMPLETELY DOCILE NOW. DEACON GRIN'S TREATMENTS HAVE BEEN A TREMENDOUS SUCCESS.

WE SHALL SEE.

WHAT IS YOUR NAME, CHILD?

IT'S A MUTE. A SIMPLETON. BUT IT CAN FOLLOW BASIC INSTRUCTIONS AND COMMANDS.

I SEE. VERY WELL, DIRECTOR. I WILL TAKE IT FROM HERE.

AND SHE WAS RIGHT. EVENTUALLY, THEY MOVED ME OUT OF THAT HATEFUL CELL...

COME ALONG.

I AM MRS. CAVENDISH, HOUSE MOTHER OF THE LADIES' WARD. YOU WILL CONDUCT YOURSELF IN AN OBEDIENT AND PROPER MANNER.

...AND INTO THE DORMITORIES...

MISBEHAVE OR SHOW ANY DISRESPECT AND YOU WILL SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

HERE WE ARE. THIS WILL BE YOUR NEW LIVING QUARTERS.

LADIES, YOU HAVE A NEW FLATMATE. PLEASE SHOW HER WHERE TO GO AND HOW TO PROPERLY BEHAVE.

OOH, IT'S A NEW GIRL!

UGH, WHAT'S WRONG WITH HER!

SHE'S WEIRD!

EWWW, LOOK AT HER EYES!

AND HER HANDTH!

WHAT IS IT?

HER LEGS TOO!

hee hee hee hee hee hee

THEY LOOK LIKE METAL!

HOW CAN THEY BE METAL?

GET OUT OF THE WAY!

MOVE! MOVE! LET ME THROUGH!

HEY, RED EYES!

I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE FINALLY HERE!

IT'S ME, KAT!

WELCOME TO THE LADIES' QUARTERS AT THE MINISTRY OF HELL...

HAHAHA HAHA

AAAA

OH, MANY A THING FRIGHTEN ME, DOCTOR. BUT IN MY EXPERIENCE, THOSE THAT LOOK THE EERIEST ARE USUALLY THE MOST INNOCUOUS.

IT'S THE MONSTERS THAT HIDE BEHIND MASKS OF INNOCENCE THAT YOU NEED TO BE WARY OF.

LIKE KATHERINE WINTER.

LIKE KATHERINE WINTER.

I MUST SAY I'M SHOCKED TO HEAR OF THE INDIGNITIES YOU SUFFERED WHILE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

THE TESTS AND ILLICIT EXPERIMENTS...THOSE SEEM MORE SUITED TO A CLANDESTINE BLACKPOOL LABORATORY THAN A PROPER GOVERNMENT FACILITY.

I THOUGHT THE MINISTRY WAS SUPPOSED TO HELP PEOPLE!

CERTAIN PEOPLE, PERHAPS. NOT ME, AND NOT THOSE OTHERS I MET THERE.

ME, I COULD UNDERSTAND. I WAS ADMITTEDLY A DANGEROUS CREATURE IN THOSE DAYS.

BUT THE OTHERS?

HA HA HA HA HA HA

THEY WERE UTTERLY HARMLESS.

HEE HEE HEE HA HA HA

LOCKED AWAY IN THOSE DARK HALLS SOLELY BECAUSE THEIR UNCONVENTIONAL APPEARANCES MIGHT BE DEEMED OFFENSIVE TO THE PRIVILEGED FEW.

THEY CALLED US MONSTERS, BUT ***THEY*** WERE THE ONES WHO ACTED MONSTROUSLY.

NO, WE INMATES WERE NEVER THE MONSTERS OF THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

THOSE WHO WERE IN CHARGE, THOSE CARETAKERS WHO SHOULD HAVE BEEN TENDING US INSTEAD OF MALTREATING US...THEY WERE THE ***TRUE*** MONSTERS...

HOW DID YOU GET METAL LEGS?

WERE YOU BORN LIKE THAT?

I WAS BORN LIKE THIS.

HI, I LEELEE. WHA' YOUR NAME? WAN' BE FRIEND?

hee hee

LADIES, LADIES, PLEASE! GIVE THE NEW GIRL SOME SPACE! CAN'T YOU SEE YOU'RE FRIGHTENING HER?

COME ALONG, RED EYES! I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND!

HERE! YOU CAN TAKE THIS BED NEXT TO ME!

HEY! THA'TH *MY* BED!

OH, BUT CLARA DEAR, DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD LET THE NEW GIRL HAVE IT, SO I CAN LOOK AFTER HER WHILE SHE GETS USED TO THE PLACE?

AFTER ALL, YOU WON'T BE NEEDING IT ANYMORE, WILL YOU? SINCE YOU'LL BE LEAVING US TOMORROW, AFTER YOU'RE..."*CURED*."

ITH THILL MY BED UNTIL THEN!

YOU CAN'T GO AROUND LORDING OVER EVERYONE AND ORDERING UTH ABOUT ATH IF YOU WERE QUEEN!

WHATEVER ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, CLARA? LORDING ABOUT? ME? I'M JUST TRYING TO HELP MY NEW FRIEND HERE. I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU'VE TAKEN A DISLIKING TO HER.

I MUST SAY, YOU'RE BEHAVING MOST STRANGELY NOW THAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO LEAVE. SO VERY UNCHARITABLE.

ARE YOU FEELING QUITE ALL RIGHT? PERHAPS THE DEACON'S TREATMENTS ARE DISAGREEING WITH YOU.

YOU REALLY OUGHT TO BE MORE CAREFUL. I WOULDN'T WANT ANYTHING UNTOWARD HAPPENING TO YOU, ESPECIALLY ON YOUR LAST DAY HERE.

YOU KNOW WHAT, YOU CAN TAKE MY BED. I DON'T WANT TO THPEND MY LATH DAY ANYWHERE NEAR YOU!

AND IF THE NEW GIRL KNEW WHAT WATH BETH FOR HER, SHE'D THAY ATH FAR AWAY FROM YOU ATH POTHIBLE TOO!

OH BRILLIANT! I'M GLAD YOU CAN STILL LISTEN TO REASON, CLARA. AND I DO HOPE DEACON GRIN IS ABLE TO FIX ALL THE THINGS THAT ARE WRONG WITH YOU.

ITH A TRAGEDY HE CAN'T CURE ***MENTAL,*** CATHETH. GUETH YOU'LL BE IN HERE FOREVER.

THANK YOU, CLARA. I'LL TRY TO PAY YOU A VISIT TONIGHT, DEAR, TO SAY OUR FINAL FAREWELLS.

VOILA! SO THIS WILL BE YOUR BED NOW, RED EYES! RIGHT NEXT TO ME!

I AM SO VERY GLAD THAT YOU FOLLOWED MY ADVICE AND WERE ABLE TO GET OUT OF THAT HORRID CELL AND MOVED INTO HERE. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A GREAT TIME TOGETHER!

JUST LISTEN TO ME AND I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU. I WILL ALWAYS TAKE CARE OF YOU, RED EYES. IT'S WHAT FRIENDS DO, YOU KNOW, THEY LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER.

YOU KNOW WHAT? I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOUR NAME EVEN THOUGH WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS FOR ALL THESE WEEKS NOW. DO YOU EVEN HAVE A NAME? YOU DON'T, DO YOU?

I KNOW! WHAT IF I GIVE YOU A NAME? WOULD YOU LIKE THAT?

HMMM... LET ME THINK, WHAT WOULD BE A GOOD NAME...

HOW ABOUT... EVIE!

DO YOU LIKE IT? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

I HAD A DOLL ONCE NAMED EVIE. SHE WAS MY MOST FAVORITEST DOLL IN THE WHOLE WORLD!

I DON'T HAVE HER ANYMORE, THOSE EVIL MONSTERS TOOK HER AWAY FROM ME.

SOME DAY SOON THOUGH, I'LL TAKE BACK EVERYTHING THAT'S RIGHTFULLY MINE. AND NO ONE WILL EVER TAKE ANYTHING FROM ME EVER AGAIN!

INCLUDING YOU! I WON'T LET ANYONE SEPARATE US NOW THAT WE'RE TOGETHER, EVIE!

I JUST KNOW WE'RE GOING TO BE THE BESTEST OF FRIENDS FOREVER AND EVER!

HEY, YOU DON'T TALK MUCH, DO YOU...

THAT EVENING...

YOU'RE SO LUCKY YOU'RE GETTING CURED, CLARA! WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ONCE YOU'RE OUT OF HERE?

I'D LIKE TO VITHIT PARITH! AND NEW YORK! AND CHINA! I WANT TO TRAVEL THE WHOLE WORLD!

I WANT TO MARRY A PRINCE!

OOOH, AND LIVE IN A CASTLE!

I'M GOING TO LEARN HOW TO RIDE A HORSE!

WHEN I'M CURED, I WANT TO FIND A HANDSOME LORD AND HAVE TEN KIDS.

ONLY TEN, *HEE HEE?*

I'M GOING TO BECOME A DOCTOR! I WANT TO HELP ALL THE CHILDREN AND PEOPLE LIKE US THAT NOBODY WANTS, JUST LIKE DEACON GRIN!

GIRLS CAN'T BE DOCTORS YOU SILLY GOOSE!

WELL, I'M GOING TO BE ONE, ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, YOU'LL SEE! AFTER ALL, IF MY SKIN CAN BE CURED, ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE!

I B-B-BELIEVE IN YOU, AUGUSTA. YOU CAN D-D-D-DO IT!

THANK YOU, NORA, YOU'RE THE BEST! WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO, ONCE YOU'RE CURED?

I D-D-DON'T KNOW, MAYBE T-T-T-TRAVEL, LIKE C-C-CLARA. WHAT WOULD YOU D-D-D-DO, RUTH?

I JUST WANT TO BE PRETTY, SO I WON'T SCARE PEOPLE ANY MORE.

OH, RUTHIE! YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL ON THE INTHIDE! AND DEACON GRIN ITH GOING TO FIXTH ALL OF UTH THO WE'RE ALL PRETTY ON THE OUTTHIDE TOO...

THEY ARE ALL SO DELUSIONAL. THEY REALLY THINK THAT QUACK IS GOING TO CURE THEM.

YOU'VE MET THE DEACON, RIGHT? GHOULISH FELLOW WITH THE STUPID MASK, AND ALL THE TESTS AND THE QUESTIONS. WOULD YOU VOLUNTARILY LET HIM OPERATE ON YOU?

NO, RIGHT? I KNEW YOU WERE A SMART ONE. I COULD TELL.

EVERYONE ELSE THINKS HE'S TRYING TO HELP US, TO CURE US. BUT I KNOW BETTER. HE'S JUST USING US FOR HIS SINISTER EXPERIMENTS.

DID HE PUT YOU IN THE CHAIR? HE DID, DIDN'T HE? THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT. THEY CUT OFF ALL MY HAIR TOO. AND I HAD SUCH LONG, BEAUTIFUL HAIR.

I WOULDN'T LET THAT CREEPER ANYWHERE NEAR ME IF I HAD THE CHOICE!

YOU AND I, WE DON'T REALLY BELONG HERE, YOU SEE THAT, RIGHT?

I'M ONLY HERE BECAUSE OF MY EVIL STEPMOTHER. SHE WAS JEALOUS THAT MY FATHER WAS SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME WITH ME, I WAS HIS FAVORITE LITTLE GIRL. SO SHE LIED ABOUT ME AND HAD ME SENT AWAY. THE OLD WITCH.

YOU DON'T BELONG HERE EITHER. YOU AREN'T LIKE THESE OTHER FREAKS. YOU'RE LIKE ME.

DON'T WORRY. I'M GOING TO FIND A WAY FOR US TO ESCAPE.

AND ONCE WE'RE OUT OF HERE, NO ONE WILL EVER HURT YOU AGAIN! I PROMISE!

HELLO, MY LOVELIES! HOW IS EVERYONE THIS EVENING?

HI, MUM!

WE'RE GOOD, MUM!

UGH, THAT'S MUM. SHE THINKS SHE'S IN CHARGE OF THIS PLACE JUST BECAUSE SHE'S BEEN HERE FOR LIKE A HUNDRED YEARS.

I DON'T KNOW WHY SHE GETS SPECIAL TREATMENT, SHE'S AS LOONY AS THE REST OF THEM.

CLARA, MY DEAR, MRS. CAVENDISH IS WAITING FOR YOU.

YOU ARE TO STAY IN THE SURGERY TONIGHT, IN PREPARATION FOR YOUR OPERATION TOMORROW MORNING.

NOW CLARA, I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER EVERYTHING I'VE TRIED TO TEACH YOU LADIES. NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL AND PERFECT, JUST THE WAY YOU ARE. WILL YOU PROMISE TO REMEMBER THAT?

I PROMITH, MUM. I'LL REMEMBER.

NO NEED TO BE NERVOUS, LOVE. TRUST IN THE DEACON, HE IS A MIRACLE WORKER. HIS HANDS ARE A GIFT FROM GOD.

OH...*UM*... OKAY.

GOOD, GOOD. GO ON THEN, MRS. CAVENDISH IS WAITING! AND GOD BLESS YOU, CLARA!

OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME...

AH, AWAKE NOW, MY SWEET ANGEL?

THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN...

ARE YOU READY NOW TO TELL US YOUR NAME?

NOW! TELL US!

TELL US!

FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US...

TELL US YOUR NAME!

LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL...

FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOR EVER AND EVER.

AMEN.

AAAAAHHHHH!!!

WAAAAHHHHHH!

SHUT UP!

HEY! WE'RE TRYING TO SLEEP HERE!

SOMEONE SHUT HER UP!

ALL RIGHT, NOW. THAT IS QUITE ENOUGH OF THAT. I EXPECT MORE UNDERSTANDING AND GRACIOUSNESS FROM PROPER YOUNG LADIES. NOW GO BACK TO BED!

WAAAAH... WAAAAHHH...

NO...NO CRY...

MUM! SHE SAD!

I KNOW, LEELEE. I WILL LOOK AFTER HER. YOU BE A GOOD GIRL AND GO ON BACK TO BED.

HUSH, NOW... EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT, LOVE... IT WAS ONLY A NIGHTMARE...

THINGS WILL GET BETTER, YOU WILL SEE. THIS PLACE IS NOT SO BAD, THOUGH IT COULD CERTAINLY USE SOME BETTER FURNISHINGS.

I KNOW IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE IT, BUT THE DEACON IS ONLY TRYING TO HELP.

WAAAHH...

IT IS A HARD WORLD OUT THERE FOR PEOPLE LIKE US. YOU WOULD NOT KNOW IT YET, BUT IT'S BETTER FOR US HERE.

YOU CAME BY YOUR AFFLICTIONS UNGENTLY, I FEAR. UNLIKE THE REST OF US WHO WERE BORN WITH OUR INFIRMITIES.

WE HAVE HAD A LIFETIME TO LEARN TO DEAL WITH IT.

:SOB: :SOB:

NO, TRUST ME, LOVE. IT'S MUCH SAFER IN HERE WITH US...

NORA!

NORA... WAKE UP!

HUH? WHA... WHO...?

SHHH! IT'S JUST ME, KAT!

K-K-K-K...

I JUST NEED A TEENY, TINY, LITTLE FAVOR.

I HAD A BIT OF AN ACCIDENT, YOU SEE, AND GOT A LITTLE TEAR IN MY GOWN. AND MRS. CAVENDISH WILL JUST *KILL* ME IF I SHOW UP WITH ANOTHER INFRACTION AGAIN.

BUT YOU DON'T HAVE ANY INFRACTIONS AT ALL, AND MRS. CAVENDISH ACTUALLY LIKES YOU, SO I WAS HOPING YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO TRADE GOWNS WITH ME, JUST THIS ONCE?

AFTER ALL, WE ARE FRIENDS, RIGHT, NORA? AND FRIENDS ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER, DON'T THEY? I WILL CERTAINLY ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR YOU.

B-B-B-B-BUT...

PLEASE, NORA. YOU'LL PROBABLY JUST GET A WARNING, BEING YOUR FIRST OFFENSE. JUST TELL THEM THAT YOU'RE SORRY. IT WON'T BE SERIOUS FOR YOU AT ALL. BUT IT WOULD BE AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT MATTER FOR ME.

I HOPE I CAN MAKE YOU UNDER-STAND HOW IMPORTANT THIS IS. IF YOU DON'T HELP ME, I...WELL, I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD DO...

UM...UM...UM...

OH, THANK YOU, NORA! THANK YOU! I'M SO VERY GRATEFUL!

NOW, PLEASE HURRY! BEFORE ANYONE COMES IN...

SHORTLY...

KAT? WHY YOU NOT IN BED?

SHHH, I AM IN BED, YOU'RE JUST DREAMING! GO BACK TO SLEEP!

WAKE UP!

EVERYONE OUT OF BED! NOW!

GET UP AND GET IN LINE! NOW! NOW! NOW!

WHICH ONE OF YOU WRETCHED CREATURES IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS NIGHT'S DESPICABLE ACT?

IF SOMEONE DOES NOT SPEAK UP IMMEDIATELY WITH A NAME, ALL OF YOU WILL BE SEVERELY PUNISHED!

NOW WHO WAS IT THAT SNUCK OUT OF THE DORMITORY TONIGHT?

KAT! I SAW KAT NO' IN BED!

YOU! WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED!

NO, NO! IT WASN'T ME! IT WASN'T ME!

YOU COME WITH--

MRS. TRASK, HOLD!

WOULD YOU CARE TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR GOWN, MISS NORA?

I-I-I-I... D-D-D-DON'T... N-N-N-N-NO...

YOU DON'T KNOW?

MRS. ARMSTRONG, THE PADDLE, IF YOU PLEASE...

NOW, MISS NORA, DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING ELSE TO SAY?

I-I-I-I-I'M S-S-S-SORRY...

YOU'RE *SORRY?!*

AAAA... AAAA... AAAA...

SORRY?!

YOU VILE...!

EVIL!

VICIOUS BEAST!

THUMP

EVIE, NO! SHHH! STAY SILENT!

AAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!

SHUT. HER. UP!

THROW HER BACK IN THE CELL!

NO, NO, PLEASE! SHE DOESN'T KNOW ANY BETTER! I'LL TAKE CARE OF HER. I'LL GET HER TO BEHAVE, I PROMISE!

SHUT HER UP! NOW! OR SHE GOES BACK IN THE CELL!

SHHHH, SHHHH! IT'S OKAY, SWEETIE, EVERYTHING IS OKAY. SHHH, JUST LOOK AT ME, LOOK AT ME AND QUIET DOWN.

TAKE THAT FILTH OUT OF HERE!

EVERYBODY ELSE GO BACK TO BED!

JUST BREATHE, EVIE. I'M RIGHT HERE, IT'S ALL OVER NOW. YOU'RE SAFE WITH ME.

:SOB: :SOB:

SHHHH, YOU'RE OKAY, YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY...I WON'T LET THEM HURT YOU.

:SOB:

SHHHH.... SHHHH...DON'T WORRY...

I'M GOING TO GET US OUT OF HERE...

TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE:

Just when young Mechanika begins to make friends among the other inmates at the Ministry of Health, secret government agents arrive to take her away. Will she end up imprisoned somewhere even worse? Main cover by Joe Benitez & Beth Sotelo, and variant cover by Jay Anacleto & Romulo Fajardo Jr.

AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL COMIC SHOP IN FEBRUARY!

Lady Mechanika Titles:

LADY MECHANIKA
(The Mystery of the Mechanical Corpse)

THE TABLET OF DESTINIES

THE LOST BOYS OF WEST ABBEY

LA DAMA DE LA MUERTE

THE CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

SANGRE

THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL
(coming soon)

LADY MECHANIKA:
STEAMPUNK COLORING BOOK I

LADY MECHANIKA:
STEAMPUNK COLORING BOOK II

For more Lady Mechanika, visit:
BENITEZPRODUCTIONS.COM *and*
FACEBOOK.COM / LADYMECHANIKA

BENITEZ PRODUCTIONS, INC. • **Joe Benitez**: Creative Director / Chief Executive Officer • **Marcia Chen**: Editor-in-Chief / Chief Financial Officer • **Michael Heisler**: Production Director • **Tabitha Martin**: Convention Director • **Andria Richard**: Production Assistant • **BENITEZPRODUCTIONS.COM**

IMAGE COMICS, INC. • **Todd McFarlane**: President • **Jim Valentino**: Vice President • **Marc Silvestri**: Chief Executive Officer • **Erik Larsen**: Chief Financial Officer • **Robert Kirkman**: Chief Operating Officer • **Eric Stephenson**: Publisher / Chief Creative Officer • **Nicole Lapalme**: Controller • **Leanna Caunter**: Accounting Analyst • **Sue Korpela**: Accounting & HR Manager • **Marla Eizik**: Talent Liaison • **Jeff Boison**: Director of Sales & Publishing Planning • **Dirk Wood**: Director of International Sales & Licensing • **Alex Cox**: Director of Direct Market Sales • **Chloe Ramos**: Book Market & Library Sales Manager • **Emilio Bautista**: Digital Sales Coordinator • **Jon Schlaffman**: Specialty Sales Coordinator • **Kat Salazar**: Director of PR & Marketing • **Drew Fitzgerald**: Marketing Content Associate • **Heather Doornink**: Production Director • **Drew Gill**: Art Director • **Hilary DiLoreto**: Print Manager • **Tricia Ramos**: Traffic Manager • **Melissa Gifford**: Content Manager • **Erika Schnatz**: Senior Production Artist • **Ryan Brewer**: Production Artist • **Deanna Phelps**: Production Artist • **IMAGECOMICS.COM**

Variant Cover Art by Matteo Scalera & Moreno Dinisio. Next Page: Main Cover Art by Joe Benitez & Beth Sorelo.

THIRTY YEARS IN THE MAKING

Lady Mechanika

The tabloids dubbed her "Lady Mechanika," the sole survivor of a mad scientist's horrific experiments which left her with mechanical limbs.

Having no memory of her captivity or her former life, Mechanika eventually built a new life for herself as a private investigator, using her unique abilities to solve cases the proper authorities couldn't – or wouldn't – handle. But she never stopped searching for the answers to her own past.

Set during a fictionalized steampunk Victorian Era, a time when magic and superstition clashed with new scientific discoveries and inventions, *Lady Mechanika* chronicles a young woman's obsessive search for her identity while she solves other mysteries involving science and the supernatural.

BENITEZ PRODUCTIONS

www.BenitezProductions.com

Lady Mechanika: The Monster of the Ministry of Hell #2 of 4
Direct Market Edition – Cover A

Rated T / Teen

image®

ImageComics.com

JOE BENITEZ'S

THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL No. 3

Lady Mechanika

MAR 2022

30 image

BENITEZ
SOTELO
HEISLER

Joe Benitez's Lady Mechanika

in

The Monster of the Ministry of Hell

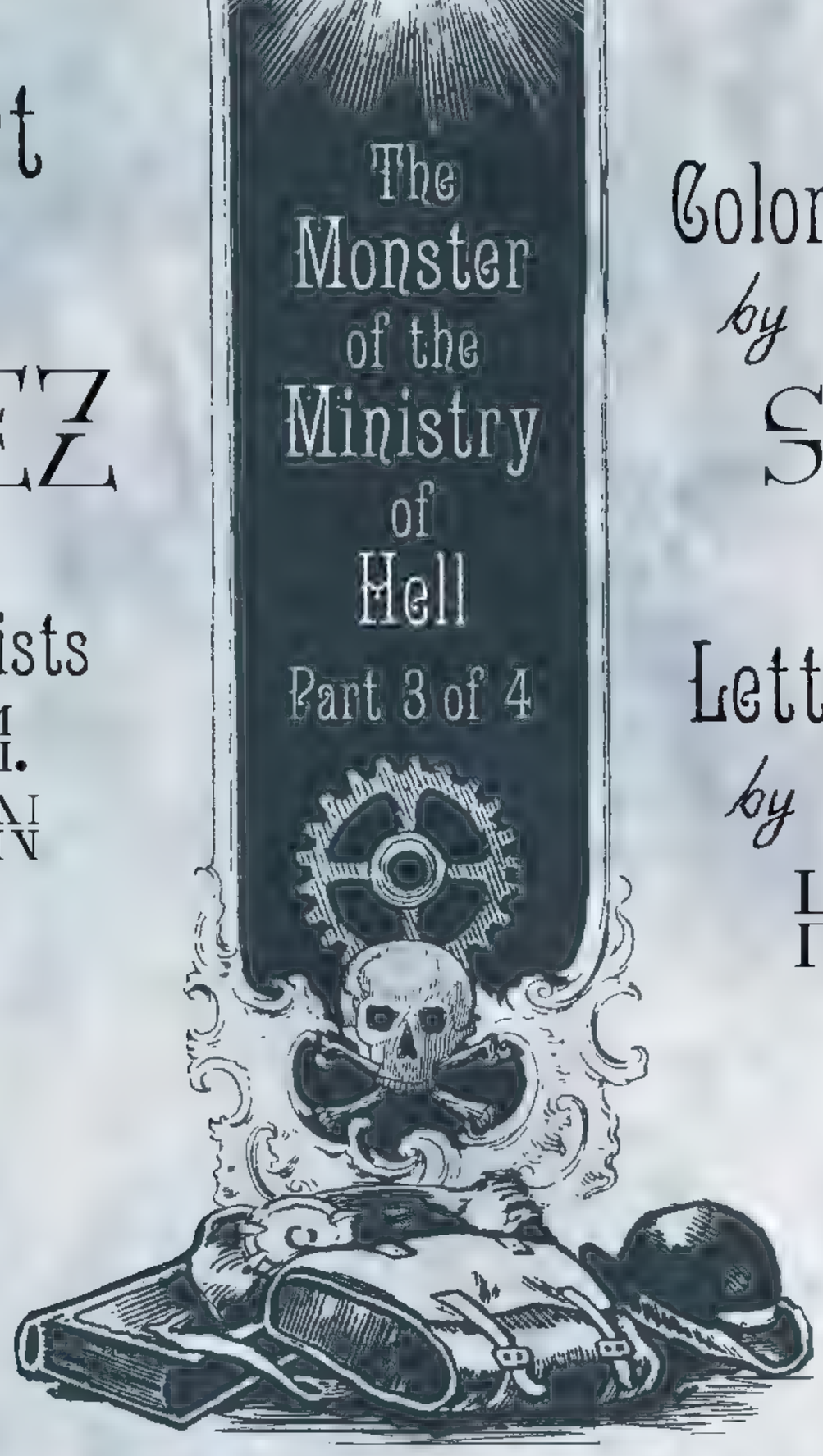
Part 3 of 4

Story & Art
by JOE BENITEZ

Writing Assists
by M. M. I. I. CHEN

Colors
by BETH SOTELO

Letters
by MICHAEL HEISLER



Lady Mechanika Created by Joe Benitez

Cover A (Direct Market Edition): Joe Benitez & Beth Sotelo
Cover B (Direct Market Variant Cover): Jay Anacleto & Romulo Fajardo Jr.
Cover C (Retailer Incentive Edition): Joe Benitez
Cover ZA (BenitezProductions.com Exclusive): Jay Anacleto
Lady Mechanika Logo by: Peter Steigerwald

LADY MECHANIKA: THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL #3 (OF 4). March 2022. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293. Copyright © 2022 Joe Benitez. All rights reserved. "Lady Mechanika," its logos, and the likenesses of all characters herein are trademarks of Joe Benitez. "Image" and the Image Comics logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for journalistic or review purposes), without the express written permission of Joe Benitez or Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events, and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, or places, without satirical intent, is coincidental. Digital edition.

Visit us on the web at
www.BenitezProductions.com

Find us on Facebook at
Facebook.com/LadyMechanika

COME ONE, COME ALL!

SEE THE INCREDIBLE, THE FANTASTICAL, THE IMPOSSIBLE ODDITIES OF THE WORLD!

WITNESS THE MAN PIG! IS HE MAN? OR IS HE PIG?

SERPENTINE

FREAKS AND ODDITIES OF THE WORLD

I DON'T BELIEVE THAT WAS REAL! PEOPLE CAN'T GROW A SNAKE TAIL! IT HAD TO BE FAKE!

THERE'S NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF, ALLIE. I AGREE WITH WINIFRED. IT WAS ALL JUST FOR SHOW, WITH COSTUMES AND PROSTHETICS AND WHATNOT.

I AM NOT AFRAID, PAPA. I'M SIMPLY HOLDING ON TO YOU FOR YOUR PROTECTION.

IS...IS SOMETHING WRONG, LADY MECHANIKA?

NO, IT'S JUST... TO BE HONEST, THESE EXPLOITATIVE DISPLAYS MAKE ME SOMEWHAT UNCOMFORTABLE, WHETHER THEY'RE REAL OR A SHAM.

I DON'T LIKE THEM EITHER.

LET'S GO BACK TO THE HOUSE OF HORRORS. NOW THAT WAS FUN!

HAR HAR HAR! DID YOU SEE THAT, MATES?

BLOKE HAS TWO SETS OF ARMS AN' LEGS! WHAT ELSE YOU RECKON HE HAS TWO OF? HAR HAR!

YES, LET'S GET OUT OF--

O!! TAKE A LOOK AT THIS FAT BASTARD! HEY, PIGGY PIGGY PIGGY!

PLEASE...

PLEASE DON'T...

OINK OINK OINK

WOULD YOU LET ME OUT? PLEASE?

I PROMISE I'LL BE GOOD.

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

WHERE YOU WANNA GO, PIG BOY? BACK TO THE FARM?

GONNA MAKE SOME BACON OUTTA YOU, PIGGY!

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

LEAVE HIM ALONE!

WHAT THE BLOODY HELL IS WRONG WITH YOU? HE'S A HUMAN BEING! TREAT HIM WITH A MODICUM OF RESPECT!

AY, MIND YOUR BUSINESS, LADY. WE'S JUST HAVIN' A LAUGH.

I THINK YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH LAUGHS. I SUGGEST YOU LEAVE. NOW.

WHO'S GONNA MAKE US? YOU?

IF YOU WISH...

IT'S THAT LADY MECHANIKA!

RUN!

HEY!

THEM BLOKES WOULDA BEEN BACK OVER AND OVER, AND BRUNG THEIR FRIENDS ALONG TOO, JUST SO THEY COULD HAVE A BIT OF A LAUGH AT THE STUPID PIG BOY!

AND YOU RUINED IT!

WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? COMING HERE AND CHASING OFF GOOD PAYING CUSTOMERS?

WHAT?

WHAT'S ALL THE COMMOTION ABOUT IN HERE?

THIS BIRD JUST WENT AN' SCARED OFF THOSE MONEY BAGS!

AW, I LIKED THEM. THEY WERE FUNNY.

A TAD RUDE PERHAPS, BUT THEIR MONEY WAS GOOD.

YEAH, ***WAS!*** NOW THEY'LL NEVER COME BACK, AND THEY'LL SPREAD THE WORD AROUND THE FAIR TOO!

YOU... YOU DON'T MIND BEING RIDICULED?

IT'S A LIVING, LADY! WHAT KINDA JOB YOU THINK ANY OF US CAN HAVE OUT THERE, HUH?

NOW DO US A BLOODY FAVOR AND GET THE BLOODY HELL OUTTA HERE!

AND DON'T EVER COME BACK!

I... I DIDN'T THINK...

COME ON, LET'S GO.

THE ***REAL*** LADY MECHANIKA WOULDN'T HAVE MADE SUCH A HUGE MISTAKE...

I BEGRUDGE NO ONE THEIR RIGHT TO EARN A LIVING--A DIFFICULT ENOUGH TASK, I KNOW, FOR THOSE WHO CANNOT CONFORM TO SOCIETAL NORMS--

--BUT TO PLAYACT AT SUCH BARBARISMS...

THE NOTION IS DISTASTEFUL TO THOSE OF US WHO EXPERIENCED THE REAL THING...

LOOK AT THIS ONE OVER HERE!

WHAT'S THIS?

MECHANICAL LIMBS?

HOW WONDERFULLY BIZARRE!

IT WAS A REGULAR OCCURRENCE AT THE MINISTRY, THE GIRLS WOULD TELL ME LATER, WHEN SOME FEW OF US, THE ONES WITH THE MOST GROTESQUE DEFORMITIES, WOULD BE HERDED INTO CAGES AND DISPLAYED FOR THE RICH AND IDLE TO STARE AND GAWK AT.

OR, SOMETIMES...

...WORSE...

HOW HIGH UP DO THESE MECHANICAL LEGS GO?

HA HA HA! YOU'RE SIMPLY TERRIBLE, REGINALD! I CAN'T TAKE YOU ANYWHERE! HA HA!

GASP!

WE SHOULD BRING THIS ONE HOME WITH US! WHAT DO YOU THINK, REGGIE? A MECHANICAL SERVING GIRL? WE'D BE THE TALK OF THE TOWN!

MY APOLOGIES, LADY CARRISON, BUT I'M AFRAID THIS ONE CANNOT BE REMOVED FROM THE PREMISES. PERHAPS YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN ONE OF THE OTHERS?

NO, NO, NO. I DON'T WANT ANY OF THE OTHERS. I WANT THE MECHANICAL GIRL! NAME YOUR PRICE.

I AM SORRY, COUNTESS, BUT SHE IS ALREADY SPOKEN FOR...

...BY THE MINISTRY OF METAPHYSICAL AFFAIRS.

OH, BUT I SIMPLY MUST HAVE HER!

REGINALD, SURELY YOU CAN--

BUT--

THE...THE *MMPA?*

NO.

I SAID NO.

PERHAPS YOU'D BE INTERESTED IN THIS ONE HERE. I GUARANTEE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT.

LADIES, I MUST WARN YOU. THIS MAY BE TOO GRUESOME FOR YOUR DELICATE CONSTITUTIONS.

OH?

REMOVE YOUR MASK.

I WILL NOT!

GUARD, IF YOU PLEASE.

NO! STOP!

:GASP!:

HOW GROTESQUELY BEAUTIFUL! MIGHT WE SEE THE REST OF HER?

WHY, OF COURSE.

GUARD, REMOVE THE DRESS TOO.

NO! PLEASE... PLEASE DON'T...

UGH, THAT'S REVOLTING!

YES... I'LL TAKE HER!

YAAAK

NOOOOOOOOO!

THAT WAS THE LAST ANY OF US EVER SAW OF MUM.

MRS. CAVENDISH...

OH, DIRECTOR! MY APOLOGIES FOR INTERRUPTING.

NOT AT ALL, DEACON. I BELIEVE MY BUSINESS HERE IS DONE. GOOD DAY, MRS. CAVENDISH.

GOOD DAY, DIRECTOR.

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, DEACON GRINDLETHORN?

I WISH TO OBSERVE PATIENT 618.

618? SHE ISN'T DUE FOR ANOTHER TREATMENT YET.

THE TREAT-MENTS ARE NOT SUFFICIENT.

NO? I WOULD SAY THEY'VE BEEN WORKING REMARKABLY WELL.

SHE'S WELL-BEHAVED, OBEYS COMMANDS WITH-OUT QUESTION...

BUT IS SHE SPEAKING?

SHE SEEMS TO HAVE DEVELOPED AN ATTACHMENT TO MISS KATHERINE, PATIENT 329. I BELIEVE WITH TIME SHE WILL--

WE ARE OUT OF TIME, MRS. CAVENDISH.

THEY WILL BE COMING FOR HER, SOON...

WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO, EVIE, WHEN WE GET OUT OF HERE? I MEAN, WHEN WE'RE "*CURED*," OF COURSE.

I THINK WE SHOULD GO TO AMERICA, THE LAND OF THE FREE. BET THEY WOULD NOT LOCK UP POOR, INNOCENT GIRLS THERE FOR NO REASON!

WE COULD GIVE OURSELVES NEW NAMES, START A WHOLE NEW LIFE...

I LIKE YOU ARM, EVIE. IT PRETTY.

HEY, WHY YOU SAD?

EVIE SAD. WHY EVIE SAD? I MAKE EVIE SAD?

NO, LEELEE, YOU DID NOTHING WRONG. SHE'S JUST EMBARRASSED.

...I COULD BE A LOST PRINCESS FROM A FOREIGN LAND, BANISHED BY MY EVIL STEPMOTHER...

EMBARRASS? WHY? EVIE PRETTY.

SHE'S JUST A LITTLE... SHY.

OHHHH...

...AND YOU COULD BE LADY EVIE, MY MOST TRUSTED AND FAITHFUL COMPANION, FOLLOWING ME INTO EXILE...

HELLO, MRS. TRASK. YOU LOOK QUITE HANDSOME TODAY. IS THAT A NEW APRON?

SAVE IT FOR THE DEACON. NEXT!

SHOP

:GASP:

EVIE?

EVIE? HEY, EVIE!

EV--

:GASP:

THNK

NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE GONE AND DONE!

OW...

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? HEY! YOU HEAR ME?

SMACK

WHO'S GOING TO CLEAN THIS MESS?

I SORRY...

DON'T WORRY, MRS. TRASK! WE'LL CLEAN IT UP, GOOD AS NEW.

YOU CAN DO IT, RIGHT, LEELEE? AFTER ALL, IT WAS YOUR FAULT FOR BUMPING EVIE.

COME ON, EVIE. LET'S GET YOU SOME MORE OF THAT DELICIOUS SLOP.

WHERE'S YOUR BOWL?

UM, OKAY...I CLEAN...

WHOA... UH, LET'S GET YOU ANOTHER BOWL...

IT'S OKAY, EVIE. I'LL HIDE IT, NO ONE HAS TO KNOW.

IT WILL BE OUR LITTLE SECRET...

EVIE... EVIE, WAKE UP...

MRRHMM...

I HAVE SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU.

DON'T WORRY, EVERYONE ELSE IS ASLEEP. COME ON...

THIS BUILDING USED TO BE SOME KIND OF FACTORY OR SOMETHING.

IT'S FULL OF THESE OLD PASSAGES AND SPACES BETWEEN THE WALLS.

NO ONE ELSE HAS A CLUE THEY EXIST, I DISCOVERED THEM. I'VE EXPLORED EVERY INCH OF THIS PLACE!

BUT THERE'S THIS DOOR UP HERE, IN THE ATTICS. I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO OPEN IT.

BUT I BET YOU COULD DO IT.

THOSE OLD BIDDIES THINK THEY'RE SO SMART BUT THEY DON'T KNOW ANYTHING. I KNOW EVERYTHING THAT GOES ON HERE!

THAT'S HOW I KNEW ABOUT YOU, IN THE CELL.

WOULD YOU? COULD YOU TRY TO OPEN THIS? FOR ME?

YOU CAN DO IT, I KNOW YOU CAN.

JUST HOLD ON TO IT REALLY, REALLY TIGHT, LIKE YOU DID WITH THAT BOWL.

NOW SQUEEZE!

KRAK

YES!

I KNEW IT! I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT! THAT'S GOING TO BE OUR TICKET OUT OF HERE, EVIE!

UGH...SMELLS LIKE NO ONE'S BEEN UP HERE FOR AGES. NO ONE BUT THE RATS!

YOU'RE NOT SCARED OF RATS, ARE YOU? I RUN INTO THEM SOMETIMES, IN BETWEEN THE WALLS.

THEY PUT TRAPS OUT FOR THEM BUT THE RATS ALWAYS SEEM TO FIND THEIR WAY BACK.

HERE, LET'S OPEN THE WINDOW AND GET SOME FRESH AIR.

WHOA, THAT'S QUITE A WAYS DOWN. GUESS WE WON'T BE ESCAPING THIS WAY.

ARE YOU AFRAID OF HEIGHTS, EVIE?

EVIE?

OH, VERY NICE! IT IS A BIT CHILLY OUT HERE. CAN YOU FIND SOMETHING FOR ME TOO?

AHHH...

SMELL THAT? THAT'S THE SMELL OF FREEDOM. JUST BREATHE IT IN...

AMAZING, ISN'T IT?

THIS IS WHAT IT'LL BE LIKE ONCE WE'RE FREE! THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD AT OUR FEET...IT'LL BE A GREAT ADVENTURE!

I HAVE A PLAN, YOU KNOW. I HAVE IT ALL MAPPED OUT.

THERE'S JUST ONE THING I NEED TO DO, ONE THING TO FIGURE OUT, AND THEN WE ARE OUT OF HERE!

YOU DO WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE, RIGHT?

DON'T WORRY, THEY WON'T CATCH US. EVERYTHING'S GOING TO GO JUST AS PLANNED!

I'M GETTING US OUT, AND NO ONE'S EVER GOING TO HIT US, OR EXPERIMENT ON US, OR HURT US IN ANY WAY EVER AGAIN!

TRUST ME, I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU. IT'LL BE JUST YOU AND ME!

TOGETHER FOREVER!

HEY, EVIE...

SCRUFF SCRUFF

I JUST THOUGHT SOMEONE SHOULD WARN YOU...BE CAREFUL AROUND KAT. SHE'S NOT AT ALL LIKE SHE SEEMS.

THE REST OF US ARE HERE BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE WAY WE LOOK. KAT'S HERE BECAUSE THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH THE WAY SHE THINKS.

JUST...JUST BE CAREFUL, OKAY?

ANYWAY, WE FOUND THESE IN THE LAUNDRY AND LEELEE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE THEM.

THEY WERE MUM'S BUT I KNOW SHE'D WANT YOU TO HAVE THEM. HERE.

IS GIFT FOR YOU, EVIE!

FOR YOU HANDS!

I THINK YOU HANDS PRETTY BUT AUGUSTA SAY THEY MAKE YOU SHY.

NOW YOU CAN COVER, AND YOU NO HAS TO BE SHY!

DO YOU LIKE?

YAY, YOU LIKE!

LET'S GO SHOW FRIENDS, OKAY?

A FEW DAYS LATER...

LEELEE'S MISSING!

WHERE'S LEELEE?

WHY ARE THEY TAKING HER THINGS?

PARDON ME, MRS. CAVENDISH?

WHAT HAPPENED TO LEELEE? IS SHE OKAY?

SHE WAS CURED.

NOW GET BACK TO WORK. THOSE CHORES AREN'T GOING TO DO THEMSELVES.

CURED?

HOW WAS SHE CURED?

I DON'T BELIEVE SHE WAS CURED.

LADIES, LADIES, I'M SURE LEELEE IS OKAY. DEACON GRIN IS A MIRACLE WORKER! HE HELPED HER SOMEHOW AND NOW SHE'S PROBABLY BACK HOME WITH HER FAMILY!

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT. DEACON GRIN IS THE GREATEST!

LET'S ALL SAY A PRAYER TO WISH LEELEE THE BEST, WHEREVER SHE MAY BE...

DID THE DEACON GROW HER A SECOND EYE? EVEN THOSE LOSERS CAN'T ACTUALLY BELIEVE THAT!

CLARA, MUM, NORA, AND NOW LEELEE... AND HUNDREDS OF OTHERS BEFORE THEM!

GIRLS ARE ALWAYS DISAPPEARING HERE.

THEY ALWAYS SAY THEY WERE CURED, OR FOUND A BETTER HOME. BUT YOU AND I, WE KNOW THE TRUTH. IT WAS THAT HATEFUL DEACON!

WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE, EVIE!

WE NEED TO GET OUT BEFORE WE GET DISAPPEARED TOO!

THAT EVENING...

...AND THEN I SAYS, OI, WHA' YOU LOOKIN' AT? IS YOU GOT A PROBLEM? 'CAUSE I'LL REMEDY IT IF'N YA DO!

BOLLOCKS, MATE! YOU DID NOT!

I DID! RIGHT TO HIS BIG OL' UGLY FACE, I DID.

HOW DID I BLOO'Y MISS THAT...

IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU NEEDED HIM TO INDUCE THE SUBJECT TO SPEAK.

THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE PREFERRED OBJECTIVE, BUT THE DEACON HAS FAILED. NO MATTER. WE HAVE OTHER MEANS WE CAN EMPLOY TO DETERMINE HOW ITS MECHANICAL APPENDAGES WERE CONSTRUCTED.

EVIE?

THE DEACON TAKES A VERY PRECISE AND METICULOUS APPROACH TO EACH OF HIS SUBJECTS. I AM CERTAIN IF YOU GIVE HIM MORE TIME--

TIME IS A COMMODITY THAT THE DEACON HAS EXHAUSTED. THE CREATURE IS NO LONGER YOUR CONCERN. WE WILL TAKE OVER FROM HERE.

VERY WELL. SHALL I SEND SOMEONE TO FETCH HER?

THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY. MY MEN ARE ALREADY ON THEIR WAY...

NO! EVIE...

THERE, AT THAT END. SECOND BED ON THE RIGHT.

WHAT... WHAT'S GOING ON?

IT'S NONE OF YOUR CONCERN. MIND YOUR BUSINESS AND GO BACK TO BED.

THE BED IS EMPTY.

THE SUBJECT HAS ESCAPED.

ALERT THE OTHERS...

BONG BONG BONG BONG BONG

OH, NO! THEY'VE ALREADY DISCOVERED YOU'RE MISSING! COME ON, EVIE, WE NEED TO HURRY!

YOU TWO TAKE THE NORTHWEST CORRIDOR...

:GASP!:

THIS WAY!

WHO'S THERE?

:GASP!:

HIDE HERE! I'LL BE BACK...

YOU! WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

I WORK HERE, SIR.

ONE OF THE SUBJECTS, THE MECHANICAL ONE, IS MISSING. HAVE YOU SEEN HER?

NO, SIR...

:GASP!:

HHGHHNNN...

KRAK

AAAH
AAAH
AAAH...

AAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!

YOU SHOULD NOT BE HERE...

TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT ISSUE:

Events from the past and the present converge, causing Lady Mechanika to finally question: who was the true monster of the Ministry of Health? The shocking conclusion to this chapter of Lady Mechanika's origins! Main cover by Joe Benitez & Beth Sotelo, and variant cover by Siya Oum.

AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL COMIC SHOP IN APRIL!

Variant Cover Art by Jay Anacleto & Romulo Fajardo Jr. Next Page: Main Cover Art by Joe Benitez & Berh Sorelo.

NEW MASTERS™

SHOBO • SHOF

"Shobo and Shof give us an original, beautifully crafted sci-fi with NEW MASTERS. It's an incredible debut from a distinctly African perspective. Shof's rhythmic storytelling, palettes, and world building visuals perfectly seam with Shobo's intriguing cast of heroes, cut throats, and politicians like only brothers can. Immerse yourself in this new world, you won't regret it!"

-Nick Dragotta, EAST OF WEST

"BEAUTIFUL. Amazing work!"

-Charlie Adlard,
THE WALKING DEAD

THEIR WORLD.
YOUR FUTURE.
AVAILABLE NOW

IMAGECOMICS.COM

#IMAGECOMICS

NEW MASTERS is TM & © 2022 Shobo Coker & Shof Coker. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

ASTRO CITY™

that was then...

BUSIEK ANDERSON ROSS

Who were the JAYHAWKS?

The Award-winning series returns. And a mystery from the past will change the future.

And don't miss ASTRO CITY METROBOOK 1 collecting the first two years of the acclaimed series, also in March.

MARCH 2022

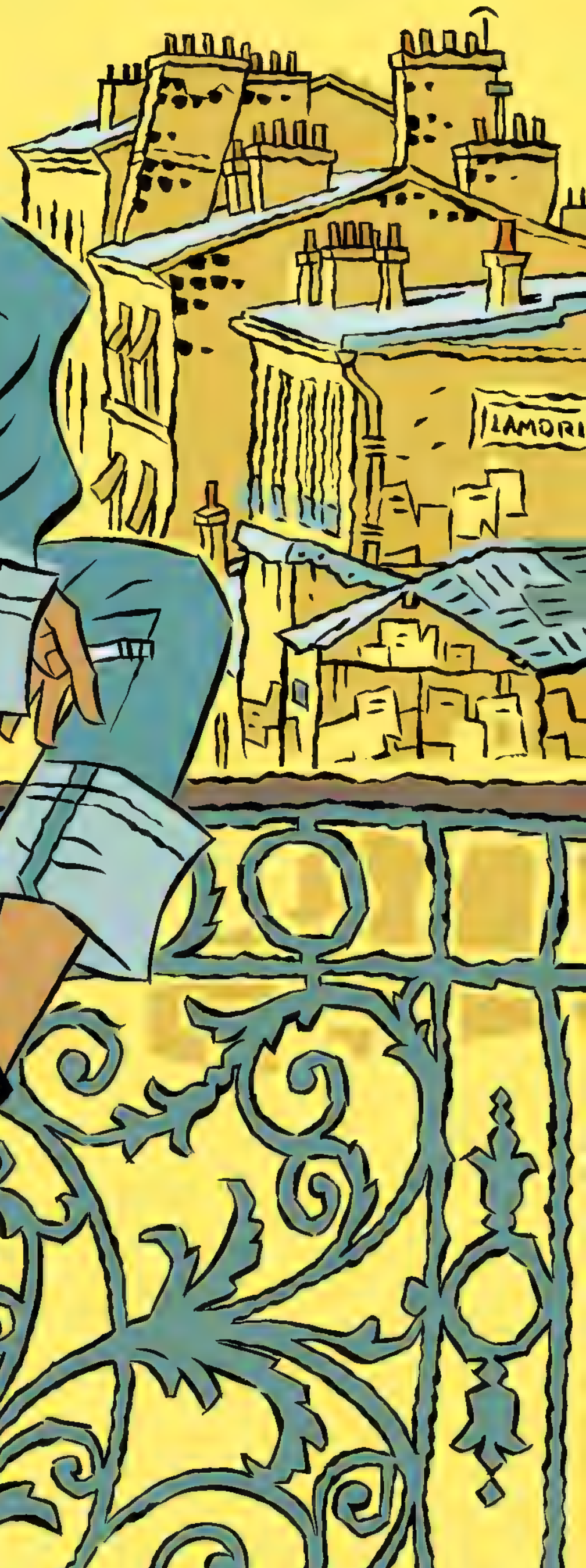
IMAGECOMICS.COM #IMAGECOMICS

ASTRO CITY is TM & © 2022 Juke Box Productions. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

ANDI WATSON
SIMON GANE

Paris™

A love of art brought them together. Their friends and family will try to tear them apart.



MAY 2022

#IMAGECOMICS
IMAGECOMICS.COM

Lady Mechanika Titles:

LADY MECHANIKA
(The Mystery of the Mechanical Corpse)

THE TABLET OF DESTINIES

THE LOST BOYS OF WEST ABBEY

LA DAMA DE LA MUERTE

THE CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

SANGRE

THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL
(coming soon)

LADY MECHANIKA:
STEAMPUNK COLORING BOOK I

LADY MECHANIKA:
STEAMPUNK COLORING BOOK II

For more Lady Mechanika, visit:
***BENITEZPRODUCTIONS.COM** and*
FACEBOOK.COM / LADYMECHANIKA

BENITEZ PRODUCTIONS, INC. • **Joe Benitez**: Creative Director / Chief Executive Officer • **Marcia Chen**: Editor-in-Chief / Chief Financial Officer • **Michael Heisler**: Production Director • **Tabitha Martin**: Convention Director • **Andria Richard**: Production Assistant • **BENITEZPRODUCTIONS.COM**

IMAGE COMICS, INC. • **Robert Kirkman**: Chief Operating Officer • **Erik Larsen**: Chief Financial Officer • **Todd McFarlane**: President • **Marc Silvestri**: Chief Executive Officer • **Jim Valentino**: Vice President • **Eric Stephenson**: Publisher / Chief Creative Officer • **Nicole Lapalme**: Controller • **Leanna Caunter**: Accounting Analyst • **Sue Korpela**: Accounting & HR Manager • **Marla Eizik**: Talent Liaison • **Jeff Boison**: Director of Sales & Publishing Planning • **Lorelei Bunjes**: Director of Digital Services • **Dirk Wood**: Director of International Sales & Licensing • **Alex Cox**: Director of Direct Market Sales • **Chloe Ramos**: Book Market & Library Sales Manager • **Emilio Bautista**: Digital Sales Coordinator • **Jon Schlaffman**: Specialty Sales Coordinator • **Kat Salazar**: Director of PR & Marketing • **Drew Fitzgerald**: Marketing Content Associate • **Heather Doornink**: Production Director • **Drew Gill**: Art Director • **Hilary DiLoreto**: Print Manager • **Tricia Ramos**: Traffic Manager • **Melissa Gifford**: Content Manager • **Erika Schnatz**: Senior Production Artist • **Ryan Brewer**: Production Artist • **Deanna Phelps**: Production Artist • **IMAGECOMICS.COM**

Lady Mechanika

The tabloids dubbed her "Lady Mechanika," the sole survivor of a mad scientist's horrific experiments which left her with mechanical limbs.

Having no memory of her captivity or her former life, Mechanika eventually built a new life for herself as a private investigator, using her unique abilities to solve cases the proper authorities couldn't – or wouldn't – handle. But she never stopped searching for the answers to her own past.

Set during a fictionalized steampunk Victorian Era, a time when magic and superstition clashed with new scientific discoveries and inventions, *Lady Mechanika* chronicles a young woman's obsessive search for her identity while she solves other mysteries involving science and the supernatural.

BENITEZ PRODUCTIONS

www.BenitezProductions.com

Lady Mechanika: The Monster of the Ministry of Hell #3 of 4
Direct Market Edition – Cover A

Rated T / Teen

image®

ImageComics.com

JOE BENITEZ'S

THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL No. 4

Lady Mechanika

MAY 2022

BENITEZ
SOTELO
HEISLER

image 30

Joe Benitez's Lady Mechanika

in

The Monster of the Ministry of Hell

Part 4 of 4

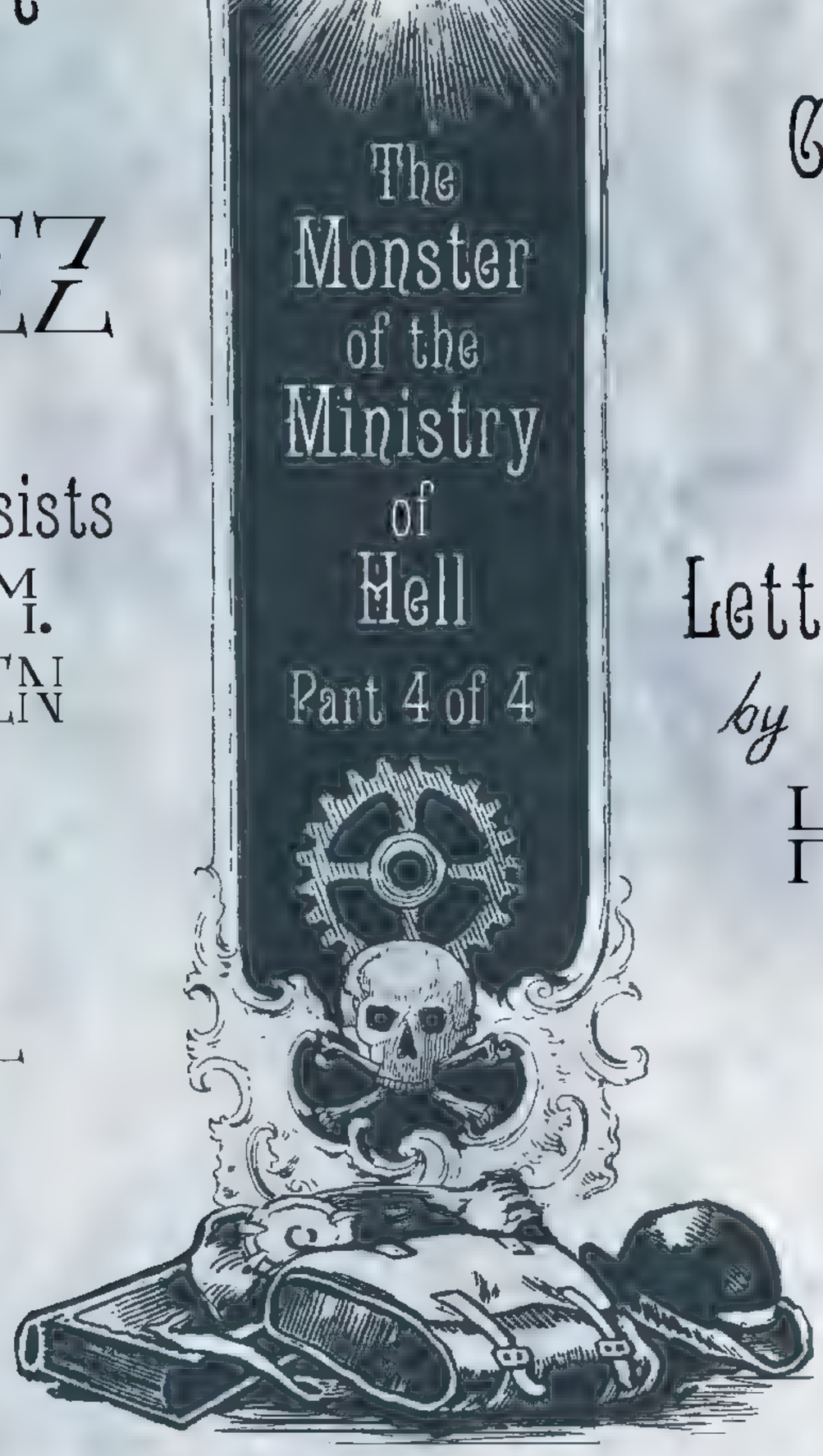
Story & Art
by JOE BENITEZ

Writing Assists
by M. M. I. I. CHEN

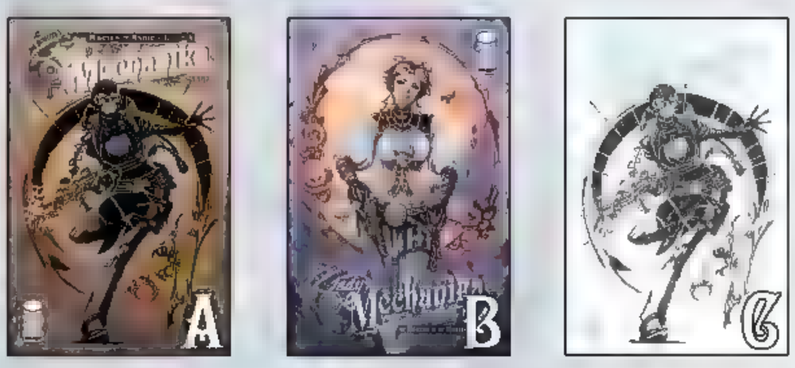
Art Assists
by MARTIN MONTIEL

Colors
by BETH SOTELO

Letters
by MICHAEL HEISLER



Lady Mechanika Created by Joe Benitez



Cover A (Direct Market Edition): Joe Benitez & Beth Sotelo
Cover B (Direct Market Variant Cover): Siya Oum
Cover C (Retailer Incentive Edition): Joe Benitez
Lady Mechanika Logo by: Peter Steigerwald

LADY MECHANIKA: THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL #4 (OF 4). May 2022. Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: PO BOX 14457, Portland, OR 97293. Copyright © 2022 Joe Benitez. All rights reserved. "Lady Mechanika," its logos, and the likenesses of all characters herein are trademarks of Joe Benitez. "Image" and the Image Comics logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for journalistic or review purposes), without the express written permission of Joe Benitez or Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events, and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events, or places, without satirical intent, is coincidental. Digital edition.

Visit us on the web at
www.BenitezProductions.com

Find us on Facebook at
Facebook.com/LadyMechanika

YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

AAAH... AAH... AAH...

YOU SHOULD NOT BE HERE!

AAAAH!

NO, NO! MY WORK!

STOP IT! YOU'RE GOING TO RUIN EVERYTHING!

YEARS OF WORK SHATTERED IN AN INSTANT...

IS EVERYTHING OKAY, DEACON--

=GASP!=

...EVIE? WHAT ARE YOU DOING DOWN HERE? WHERE...

AAH...

YOU HAVE CAUSED ENOUGH TROUBLE FOR TODAY, LITTLE LAMB. TIME TO--

AAH...

AAH...

AAAAAHHH!

THUMP

THWACK

STOP... CHILD...I AM ONLY TRYING TO...

AAAAHH!

...HELP YOU...

AAAAHHHH!

AAAAHHHH!

NO, STOP! EV--

THUD

AAAHHH!

UNGH...

SLASH

HUH... HUH...HUH... HUH...

:GASP: OH, NO...

WHAT... WHAT HAVE YOU DONE...

THERE IT IS!

SUBDUE THE CREATURE!

WHAT HAPPENED...IS THAT...WAS THAT... GRINDLETHORN?

CAREFUL, MATES! LOOK WHAT IT DID TO THAT POOR BLOKE!

FWIP

SECURE THE SUBJECT AND PREPARE FOR TRANSPORT!

I WARNED HIM THAT THIS CREATURE WAS DANGEROUS. IT WAS UNWISE TO RELEASE IT FROM ITS CELL.

YES, AND HE PAID THE ULTIMATE PRICE FOR THAT MIS-TAKE.

SO, WHICH ONE OF YOU LUCKY BLOKES IS TAKIN' GUARD DUTY WITH THIS THING ON THE RIDE TO SECTION SEVEN? I'M OUT, I DID IT LAST TIME.

OY, I DON' WANNA DO IT! THA'S A BLOODY LONG DRIVE!

I'LL GO.

YEAH? YOU'RE A RIGH' PROPER FELLOW THERE, MATE...

UNGH...

HEAV... HEAVENLY FATHER...

ETERNAL :SNIFF: ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO HIM...AND LET :SNIFF: LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON HIM :SNIFF:...

MAY HE REST :SNIFF SNIFF: IN PEACE...

MY CONDOLENCES ON YOUR LOSS, DIRECTOR. WE'LL TAKE OVER FROM HERE.

THE CREATURE IS SECURED, SIR.

TAKE IT TO SECTION SEVEN AND CONFINE IT IN HOLDING.

YES, SIR!

PUT PUT PUT PUT

...HEARD IT GOT PRETTY ROUGH IN THERE, EH? NEVER A DULL MOMENT ON THIS JOB, AM I RIGH', MATE?

NOW I'VE SEEN SOME PRE'TY CRAZY THINGS WORKIN' HERE--YOU REMEMBER THA' THING WITH THE TENTACLES WOT TOOK OUT SANDERS AT THE OL' WATERFRONT? THOUGHT THA' ONE WAS BAD!

WHAT I'M SAYIN' IS, YOU THINK YOU'VE SEEN IT ALL, RIGH'? AND THEN YOU COME ACROSS A WEE LIT'LE GIRL LOOKIN' THING WOT BEATS A GROWN MAN TO DEATH, BASHES THE POOR CHAP'S HEAD INTO BLOODY PULP WITH ITS BARE HANDS IT DID, RIGH'? BLOODY BUGGERIN' HELL!

HEY, YOU'RE RATHER QUIET TONIGH'. YOU FEELIN' ALL RIGH' THERE, MATE?

YOU TALK TOO MUCH.

HUH--

BOOM

KLK-CHNK

THOUGHT YOU COULD GET AWAY FROM ME, DIDN'T YOU?

NOT A CHANCE, RED EYES! TOLD YOU I WOULDN'T LET ANYONE SEPARATE US!

CAN YOU BELIEVE THOSE IMBECILES? THEY ACTUALLY BELIEVED I WAS ONE OF THEM! THIS UNIFORM DOESN'T EVEN FIT ME PROPERLY! WHAT A BUNCH OF MORONS.

I TELL YOU, EVIE, THE WORLD IS FULL OF STUPID, GULLIBLE PEOPLE WHO WILL BELIEVE ANYTHING YOU TELL THEM WITHOUT QUESTION. WE CAN GET THEM TO DO WHATEVER WE WANT, GIVE US ANYTHING WE WANT! IT'S SO EASY, YOU'LL SEE. I'LL TEACH YOU!

HERE, LET'S GET YOU OUT OF THOSE CHAINS!

COME ON, WE BEST HURRY AND GO BEFORE THEY FIND THE BODY OF THAT IDIOT I TOOK THIS OUTFIT FROM. I HID HIM IN A STORAGE CLOSET IN THE BASEMENT, I TOLD YOU I KNEW THAT PLACE INSIDE AND OUT. THEY MAY NOT EVEN FIND HIM FOR--

OOOMPH!

HEY, IT'S OKAY! YOU'RE SAFE NOW!

I TOLD YOU I WOULD LOOK AFTER YOU. FRIENDS ALWAYS LOOK OUT FOR EACH OTHER.

TH...THANK YOU...

WHOA! YOU CAN TALK?!

WERE YOU ABLE TO TALK THIS WHOLE TIME? YOU LITTLE BUGGER, THAT'S SO SNEAKY!

I LOVE IT!

OH, WE'RE GOING TO GET ALONG FABULOUSLY! YOU KNOW, I WAS JUST THINKING HOW UTTERLY BORING THINGS WOULD BE IF I HAD TO SPEND THIS WHOLE TIME JUST LISTENING TO MYSELF TALK! WHO WOULD WANT TO DO THAT, RIGHT?

NOW, ARE YOU READY FOR OUR GREAT ADVENTURE?

BRILLIANT! COME ON!

PUT PUT PUT

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE THE *GRANDEST* TIME TOGETHER...

I'VE NEVER SPOKEN OF THAT STORY BEFORE TODAY, TO ANYONE. IT WAS A...A DIFFICULT TIME, THE FIRST TIME I EVER TOOK ANOTHER PERSON'S LIFE. IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT I'M PROUD OF.

BUT YOU SEE, DOCTOR, ALL OF US CAN BE CAPABLE OF MONSTROUS ACTS IF WE FIND OURSELVES IN DESPERATE ENOUGH CIRCUMSTANCES. IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU AREN'T A GOOD PERSON, AND IT DOESN'T MEAN YOU DON'T DESERVE FORGIVENESS.

THANK YOU, LADY MECHANIKA. I AM VERY, VERY TOUCHED THAT YOU HAVE PLACED SUCH TRUST IN ME. REST ASSURED I WILL NEVER BETRAY YOUR CONFIDENCE.

YOU MUST KNOW THAT I HOLD YOU IN THE HIGHEST REGARD AND, IF I MAY BE SO BOLD, CONSIDER YOU A FRIEND, A GOOD FRIEND.

LIKEWISE, DOCTOR. LIKEWISE.

YOU HAVE GIVEN ME MUCH TO THINK ABOUT. PERHAPS MY OWN GRIEVOUS ACTS MAY BE FORGIVEN...SOME DAY.

BUT I HAVE SOMETHING THAT MAY EASE YOUR OWN CONSCIENCE SOMEWHAT.

YOU DID NOT KILL DR. GRINDLETHORN. HE IS ALIVE AND WELL, AS FAR AS I KNOW.

WHAT? THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE.

THE NAME SOUNDED FAMILIAR, BUT I COULDN'T PLACE IT UNTIL YOU MENTIONED HIS MASK, A RATHER HARD THING TO FORGET!

I AM IN NO MOOD FOR GAMES, DOCTOR.

I...I...I'M NOT...I WOULD NEVER... IT...IT'S TRUE! GRINDLETHORN IS ALIVE.

I ATTENDED A LECTURE HE GAVE NO MORE THAN TWO YEARS AGO, ON SKIN GRAFTING. HIS RESEARCH IS FUNDED BY BLACKPOOL.

IT CAN'T BE THE SAME MAN. I KNOW I KILLED HIM! THE MEMORY HAS HAUNTED ME TO THIS VERY DAY!

APPARENTLY HE SURVIVED, UNLESS THERE'S ANOTHER MAN NAMED GRINDLETHORN WHO SPORTS A GROTESQUE MASK AND IS ENGAGED IN THE SAME LINE OF WORK.

NO, IT ISN'T POSSIBLE. I REMEMBER WHAT I DID!

LADY MECHANIKA, PARDON ME FOR SAYING SO, BUT YOU WERE JUST A CHILD, A CHILD WHO HAD BEEN EXPOSED TO AN INCREDIBLE AMOUNT OF TRAUMA. IS IT NOT WITHIN THE REALM OF POSSIBILITY THAT YOU WERE MISTAKEN?

WHERE? WHERE CAN I FIND HIM?

"HE HAS A RESEARCH FACILITY HERE, IN THE CITY..."

FWHOOSH

FWHOOSH

FWHOOSH

FSSSS

..SOUNDED LIKE IT CAME FROM...

YOU THERE! STOP--

THWACK

UNGH...

IF YOU'D RATHER NOT HAVE YOUR ARM BROKEN, BE A DEAR AND TELL ME WHERE TO FIND GRINDLETHORN?

UNGH...UNGH...

...THERE... HIS OFFICE IS... THERE...

GOOD CHAP! CHEERS!

HANDS UP! DON'T MOVE OR I'LL--

THUD

KWAMP
CLICK
UNGH...

NO...

...NOT AGAIN...

GRINDLETHORN?

YES? WHA--

IT *IS* YOU!

ALL THESE YEARS!

AND YOU'RE STILL CONDUCTING YOUR...YOUR... EXPERIMENTS!

MASH

YOU MONSTER!

NO, NO... WAIT!

UNGH!

HOW ARE YOU EVEN STILL ALIVE?

THUNK

I KILLED YOU!

UNGH... EH...EE... EVIE?

IT...IT IS YOU, ISN'T IT?

WHO... WHO ARE YOU?

IT'S ME...

AUGUSTA. FROM THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

AUGUSTA? BUT...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHY ARE YOU MASQUERADING AS GRINDLETHORN?

I'M NOT PRETENDING TO BE HIM, REALLY. I JUST ADOPTED HIS NAME, TO HONOR THE MAN WHO HELPED GET ME HERE.

I'M A DOCTOR NOW, EVIE. JUST LIKE I ALWAYS DREAMED OF, THANKS TO DEACON GRIN.

I DON'T CARE IF HE MADE YOU THE BLOODY QUEEN OF ENGLAND! THAT MAN WAS A BUTCHER! HOW COULD YOU...***HONOR*** HIM? ***GRINDLETHORN!***

OH, EVIE... NO...

DEACON GRINDLETHORN WAS A GOOD MAN, A GODLY MAN. HE WAS ONLY TRYING TO HELP US...AND HE ***DID*** HELP US, HE HELPED ***ME.***

HELP? YOU CALL WHAT HE DID, ***HELP?*** HE TORTURED US! EXPERIMENTED ON US!

MEDICAL TESTS! UNPLEASANT SOMETIMES, BUT HE NEEDED TO ASSESS OUR CONDITIONS IN ORDER TO DEVELOP THE PROPER TREATMENTS...

THEY WERE MORE THAN JUST ***UNPLEASANT!*** HOW MANY TIMES WAS I SHOCKED? BURNED!

CUT OPEN JUST TO WAKE AND FIND HIM LOOMING OVER ME WITH HIS HANDS BURIED IN MY INNARDS AND THAT...

...THAT GHASTLY GRIN ON HIS FACE!

HIS BEDSIDE MANNER WASN'T THE BEST, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT. BUT IS THAT A REASON TO VILIFY A MAN? BECAUSE HE WAS AWKWARD AND LACKING IN THE SOCIAL GRACES?

WHAT ABOUT ALL THE GIRLS HE KILLED? WHAT ABOUT LEELEE, AND NORA, AND CLARA, AND ALL THE OTHERS?

GRIN DIDN'T KILL ANY OF THEM...

I SAW THEM! I SAW THEIR HEADS, KEPT IN JARS IN HIS MORBID TROPHY ROOM!

THOSE WERE MEDICAL SPECIMENS, LIKE THE ONES I HAVE HERE, TAKEN FROM THOSE WHO WERE ALREADY DEAD. HE DIDN'T KILL--

THEN WHO KILLED THEM?

IT WAS K-K-KAT.

KAT K-KILLED THEM.

N...NORA?

BUT I...I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD...THEY TOOK YOU AWAY AND YOU NEVER CAME BACK.

THEY MIGHT HAVE K-K-KILLED ME, THEY WOULD HAVE IF NOT FOR DEACON G-G-GRIN. MRS. CAVENDISH B-BEAT ME SO BADLY I'M B-B-BLIND NOW IN ONE EYE.

THEY THOUGHT I KILLED C-C-CLARA, BUT IT WASN'T ME. IT WAS K-K-KAT.

I TRIED TO T-TELL THEM SHE TRICKED ME INTO SWITCHING G-G-GOWNS, BUT THEY WOULDN'T L-LISTEN. THEY DIDN'T B-B-BELIEVE ME.

I SAW IT ALL. I SAW KAT SNEAKING BACK INTO THE DORMITORY, BUT I WAS TOO COWARDLY TO SPEAK UP.

L-L-LUCKILY DEACON GRIN CAME BY TO T-T-TREAT MY INJURIES. HE C-COULDN'T SAVE MY EYE, BUT HE B-BELIEVED ME. HE S-S-SAVED ME.

I TRIED TO WARN YOU ABOUT KAT, EVIE.

GIRLS THAT SHE DIDN'T LIKE, OR WHO CROSSED HER IN ANY WAY, HAD A TENDENCY TO HAVE ACCIDENTS, OR JUST DISAPPEAR. I THINK SHE KILLED LEELEE TOO.

LEELEE... BUT...HOW? WHY? LEELEE WAS A SWEETHEART, SHE WOULDN'T HURT ANYONE!

AUTOPSY? THAT'S WHY HER BODY WAS IN THE BASEMENT? YOU... YOU WERE THERE? THAT WAS YOU?

SHE WAS GETTING TOO FRIENDLY WITH YOU, AND KAT WOULDN'T HAVE LIKED THAT.

LEELEE WAS FED RAT POISON. WE HAD JUST FINISHED PERFORMING THE AUTOPSY ON HER WHEN YOU...WELL, WHEN YOU STUMBLED IN.

YES. I TRIED TO STOP YOU BUT YOU SLASHED AT ME, DO YOU REMEMBER?

I...I'M SORRY...I... I DIDN'T...

DEACON GRIN LET ME ASSIST HIM SOMETIMES. HE WAS TEACHING ME, EVER SINCE HE LEARNED THAT I WANTED TO BE A DOCTOR.

HE EVEN SPONSORED MY APPLICATION TO MEDICAL SCHOOL, AND SUGGESTED I WEAR A MASK TO HIDE MY SKIN CONDITION, AS WELL AS MY GENDER. HE HAD DONE THE SAME, TO HIDE HIS FACE AFTER HE WAS DISFIGURED.

HE RECOGNIZED THE POTENTIAL IN ME, AND I'M SO GRATEFUL THAT HE DID.

WHO ELSE WOULD EVER THINK TO HELP SOMEONE WHO LOOKED LIKE ME--A ***GIRL*** WHO LOOKED LIKE ME--BECOME A DOCTOR?

BUT DEACON GRIN UNDERSTOOD. HE WAS ONE OF US.

HE WASN'T BORN WITH HIS DISFIGUREMENT, WASN'T USED TO IT LIKE THE REST OF US. IT MADE HIM AWKWARD AND UNCOMFORTABLE AROUND PEOPLE, SO HE HID BEHIND HIS MASK, AND BEHIND HIS WORK.

THE DOCTOR WITH THE SAD SMILE.

WHO KNOWS WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE ACCOMPLISHED IF HE... WELL, NONE OF THAT REALLY MATTERS NOW, DOES IT?

I MAY NOT BE AS BRILLIANT AS HE WAS, BUT I'M DOING WHAT I CAN TO CONTINUE HIS WORK. TO HELP OTHER PEOPLE LIKE US.

WHAT... WHAT ABOUT MUM?

I LOOKED BUT HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FIND WORD OF HER.

SOME AT THE MINISTRY WEREN'T QUITE AS COMPASSIONATE AS DEACON GRIN. THE DIRECTOR AND MRS. CAVENDISH, THEY HAD SOME ARRANGEMENT, ALLOWING PEOPLE TO VIEW AND SOMETIMES EVEN TAKE PATIENTS IN EXCHANGE FOR COIN.

I'M SURE THE DEACON DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT. HE WOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED IT. HE ALWAYS DID EVERYTHING HE COULD TO HELP US, TO PROTECT US, IN HIS OWN WAY.

DO YOU KNOW WHY HE WORE THAT SMILE ON HIS MASK? I ASKED HIM ONCE.

HE TOLD ME, SO THAT THE CHILDREN HE TENDED WOULDN'T BE AFRAID OF HIM. HE WANTED THEM...HE WANTED ***US*** TO BE GREETED BY A FRIENDLY SMILE WHENEVER WE SAW HIM, TO KNOW THAT WE WERE IN SAFE AND CARING HANDS.

THAT'S THE MAN HE WAS.

BUT...BUT IF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS TRUE...IF HE...

...THEN I... I KILLED... NO...

YOU WERE JUST A CHILD, EVIE. YOU WERE SCARED, IN SHOCK.

IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. A HORRIBLE, TRAGIC ACCIDENT.

NO...

EVIE...

DON'T CALL ME THAT.

I...I NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE...

EVIE, W-W-WAIT!

NO, LET HER GO.

IF SHE'S THE WOMAN I THINK SHE IS, IF THE STORIES THEY SAY ABOUT HER ARE TRUE, THE REVELATIONS WE'VE GIVEN HER TODAY WILL BE EXCEEDINGLY DIFFICULT TO ACCEPT.

"I ONLY HOPE THEY WON'T DESTROY HER..."

NO...NO...

THEY PUT TRAPS OUT FOR THEM BUT THE RATS ALWAYS SEEM TO FIND THEIR WAY BACK.

I JUST THOUGHT SOMEONE SHOULD WARN YOU, BE CAREFUL AROUND KAT.

I'LL PAY YOU A VISIT TONIGHT, DEAR, TO SAY OUR FINAL FAREWELLS.

WOULD YOU CARE TO EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR GOWN, MISS NORA?

I KNOW IT MAY NOT SEEM LIKE IT, BUT THE DEACON IS ONLY TRYING TO HELP.

YOU HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR, MY LITTLE LAMB.

I AM ONLY TRYING TO... HELP YOU...

NO...

NO...

EPILOGUE

"...VANQUISHING THE BEAST FOR ALL TIME."

"SO ENDS THE TALE OF LADY MECHANIKA AND THE ROCK TROLL OF STONE RIVER."

THAT WAS A GOOD ONE, PAPA.

WHEN I GROW UP, I'M GOING TO GET MECHANICAL LEGS JUST LIKE LADY MECHANIKA!

I COULD BE HER ASSISTANT...AND HELP HER FIGHT EVIL CRIMINALS...

MAYBE SOMEDAY.

GOOD NIGHT, SWEETHEART.

AND MAYBE MOMMA...MOMMA COULD GET MECHANICAL LEGS TOO...AND THEN...THEN SHE COULD WALK AGAIN... AND WE COULD FIGHT...MONSTERS... TOGETHER...

DR. LITTLETON? THERE'S A CARRIAGE WAITING FOR YOU OUTSIDE. THEY SAID YOU WERE EXPECTING THEM?

OH, UH...YES, YES. THANK YOU, MRS. HAVENDASH. I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN.

YES.

YES, THAT WOULD BE...ALL THAT I EVER WANTED...

DR. LITTLETON. I BELIEVE YOU HAVE SOMETHING FOR ME?

OH! I, UH...I DIDN'T EXPECT YOU...THAT IS, I... I ASKED THEM TO SEND SOMEONE, YES, BUT I...I DIDN'T THINK YOU...

IT WAS MY UNDERSTANDING THAT YOU HAVE A VERY IMPORTANT PACKAGE WHICH NEEDS TO BE TRANSPORTED WITH THE UTMOST SECURITY AND SECRECY?

OH, YES, YES, OF COURSE.

WELL?

HMMM?

THE PACKAGE?

OH, RIGHT. UM, HERE...HERE IT IS.

THANK YOU. WHAT IS IT?

OH, UH... BLOOD...A BLOOD SAMPLE.

INDEED. WHOSE BLOOD?

UM...HER... HERS...LADY...LADY MECHANIKA'S...

WELL, WELL, WELL... I SUPPOSE THAT IS IN FACT WORTHY OF MY PERSONAL ATTENTION.

AM I TO ASSUME, THEN, THAT YOU'RE RETURNING TO YOUR WORK, DOCTOR?

OH, I... UM...I...

CONSTRUCTION ON THE NEW LABORATORY IS COMPLETE, WITH ALL THE LATEST EQUIPMENT YOU COULD POSSIBLY DESIRE.

IF THERE'S ANYTHING ELSE YOU NEED, WE WILL ACQUIRE IT. MONEY IS, OF COURSE, NO OBJECT.

I...UH...

YES. YES, I'LL BE BACK NEXT WEEK.

EXCELLENT. LORD BLACKPOOL WILL BE MOST PLEASED.

I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR NEW RESEARCH, DOCTOR...

THE END FOR NOW

NEXT TIME IN LADY MECHANIKA...

LADY MECHANIKA is going on hiatus for a few months, but don't worry! The team is already hard at work on the next story, which will feature interior art by guest artist Siya Oum (LOLA XOXO, DC's BOMBSHELLS UNITED)!

While trying to deal with some newly discovered revelations about her past, Lady Mechanika accepts a job that sends her off alone into the furthest reaches of Siberia, searching for *The Devil Dragon of Lake Labynkyr!*
Story by Joe Benitez & M. M. Chen, Art by Siya Oum, Colors by Beth Sotelo, and Letters by Michael Heisler.

COMING SOON FROM IMAGE COMICS!

Here's a sneak peek at Siya's beautiful artwork:

Variant Cover Art by Siya Oum. Next Page: Main Cover Art by Joe Benitez & Beth Sorelo.

SPAWN CROSSOVER *GEIGER*
RECKLESS **EAST OF WEST** **I KILL GIANTS**
THE WALKING DEAD I HATE FAIRYLAND
THE DEPARTMENT OF TRUTH ***SEX CRIMINALS***
KILLADELPHIA BATTLE CHASERS
SAVAGE DRAGON
PRETTY DEADLY **BLACK SCIENCE** THE WICKED + THE DIVINE
MONSTRESS **CHEW** *SWEET PAPRIKA*
GIDEON FALLS

MOONSTRUCK UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY **SKYWARD** OBLIVION SONG
DESCENDER ***PAPER GIRLS*** **THE OLD GUARD**
INVINCIBLE WANTED *BITTER ROOT*
STRAY DOGS WHAT'S THE FURTHEST PLACE FROM HERE **SNOTGIRL**
SAGA ***KICK-ASS*** **WITCHBLADE** *ISOLA*
INKBLOT
GOD COUNTRY **CRIMINAL** DIE
FIRE POWER *NOCTERRA*
HAPPY! JUPITER'S LEGACY
LITTLE BIRD **RAT QUEENS** **RADIANT BLACK**
ICE CREAM MAN **DECORUM** ***BITCH PLANET***
DEADLY CLASS MIDDLEWEST

IMAGE CLASSICS

30 EST. 1992 image

A BOOK FOR EVERY READER.

IMAGECOMICS.COM

RADIANT BLACK @ Higgans, Costa, Chen, Lafuente & Carey. All rights reserved. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved.

Lady Mechanika Titles:

LADY MECHANIKA
(The Mystery of the Mechanical Corpse)

THE TABLET OF DESTINIES

THE LOST BOYS OF WEST ABBEY

LA DAMA DE LA MUERTE

THE CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN

LA BELLE DAME SANS MERCI

SANGRE

THE MONSTER OF THE MINISTRY OF HELL
(September 2022)

LADY MECHANIKA:
STEAMPUNK COLORING BOOK I

LADY MECHANIKA:
STEAMPUNK COLORING BOOK II

For more Lady Mechanika, visit:

BENITEZPRODUCTIONS.COM *and*
FACEBOOK.COM / LADYMECHANIKA

BENITEZ PRODUCTIONS, INC. • **Joe Benitez**: Creative Director / Chief Executive Officer • **Marcia Chen**: Editor-in-Chief / Chief Financial Officer • **Michael Heisler**: Production Director • **Tabitha Martin**: Convention Director • **Andria Richard**: Production Assistant • **BENITEZPRODUCTIONS.COM**

IMAGE COMICS, INC. • **Robert Kirkman**: Chief Operating Officer • **Erik Larsen**: Chief Financial Officer • **Todd McFarlane**: President • **Marc Silvestri**: Chief Executive Officer • **Jim Valentino**: Vice President • **Eric Stephenson**: Publisher / Chief Creative Officer • **Nicole Lapalme**: Controller • **Leanna Caunter**: Accounting Analyst • **Sue Korpela**: Accounting & HR Manager • **Marla Eizik**: Talent Liaison • **Jeff Boison**: Director of Sales & Publishing Planning • **Lorelei Bunjes**: Director of Digital Services • **Dirk Wood**: Director of International Sales & Licensing • **Alex Cox**: Director of Direct Market Sales • **Chloe Ramos**: Book Market & Library Sales Manager • **Emilio Bautista**: Digital Sales Coordinator • **Jon Schlaffman**: Specialty Sales Coordinator • **Kat Salazar**: Director of PR & Marketing • **Monica Garcia**: Marketing Design Manager • **Drew Fitzgerald**: Marketing Content Associate • **Heather Doornink**: Production Director • **Drew Gill**: Art Director • **Hilary DiLoreto**: Print Manager • **Tricia Ramos**: Traffic Manager • **Melissa Gifford**: Content Manager • **Erika Schnatz**: Senior Production Artist • **Ryan Brewer**: Production Artist • **Deanna Phelps**: Production Artist • **IMAGECOMICS.COM**

Joe Benitez's Lady Mechanika

The tabloids dubbed her "Lady Mechanika," the sole survivor of a mad scientist's horrific experiments which left her with mechanical limbs.

Having no memory of her captivity or her former life, Mechanika eventually built a new life for herself as a private investigator, using her unique abilities to solve cases the proper authorities couldn't – or wouldn't – handle. But she never stopped searching for the answers to her own past.

Set during a fictionalized steampunk Victorian Era, a time when magic and superstition clashed with new scientific discoveries and inventions, *Lady Mechanika* chronicles a young woman's obsessive search for her identity while she solves other mysteries involving science and the supernatural.

BENITEZ PRODUCTIONS

www.BenitezProductions.com

image®

ImageComics.com

Lady Mechanika: The Monster of the Ministry of Hell #4 of 4
Direct Market Edition – Cover A

Rated T / Teen